

Franciscan Fathers

Little Falls, Minn.

cat.
BIBLE STORY SERMONETTES
FOR THE CHILDREN'S MASS

**FOR THE SUNDAYS OF THE
ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR**

BY

THE REV. FREDERICK A. REUTER

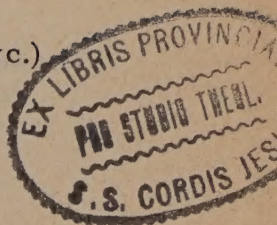
*Author of Sermons for the Children's Mass
Parable Sermonettes, etc.*

WITHDRAWN

252.75
R447 B

NEW YORK
JOSEPH F. WAGNER (INC.)
LONDON: B. HERDER

Franciscan Fathers
Little Falls, Minn.



Nihil Obstat

ARTHUR J. SCANLAN, S.T.D.

Censor Librorum

Imprimatur

PATRICK CARDINAL HAYES

Archbishop of New York

NEW YORK, July 29, 1927

New Printing November, 1947

Copyright, 1927, by JOSEPH F. WAGNER, New York

PRINTED IN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

52. x1
44

TO
MY FRIEND
REVEREND MARTIN LANG
RECTOR OF ST. BENEDICT'S CHURCH
BROOKLYN, N. Y.

224

20.140

CONTENTS

	PAGE
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT. A Serious Word.....	1
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT. Moral Courage.....	5
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT. God's Favorite.....	8
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT. Happiness and Unhappiness...	10
FEAST OF CHRISTMAS. The Three Shepherds.....	12
SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS. Perseverance	17
SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CIRCUMCISION. Love for the Holy Name.....	22
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY. Obey God.....	27
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY. A Child's Pastime.....	31
THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY. A Weak Point.....	34
FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY. Forget and Forgive....	38
FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY. Those Gray White Years	42
SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY. The Blessing of Trials..	45
SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY. Our Lord's Vineyard.....	48
SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY. God's Tract of Land.....	52
QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY. The Royal Road.....	56
FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT. Pleasure Is Short-Lived.....	60
SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT. In Good Company.....	63
THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT. The Word of God.....	67
FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT. Deeds of Love.....	71
PASSION SUNDAY. How to Bear a Reprimand.....	75
PALM SUNDAY. Our Sorrowful Mother.....	78
EASTER SUNDAY. Death Conquered.....	81
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER. The Blessing of Obedience...	84
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER. A Shepherd's Joys and Sorrrows	87
THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER. A Joy Everlasting.....	90
FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER. Punishment Never Fails...	93
FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER. Our Great Advocate.....	96
SUNDAY AFTER THE ASCENSION. Our Departed Parents.....	100

	PAGE
PENTECOST. Heed Jesus's Word.....	104
TRINITY SUNDAY. I Am a Christian.....	107
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. Praise and Bless God's Greatest Gift	110
THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. The Outcast.....	113
FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. Labor and Work.....	116
FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. Consequences of Anger..	119
SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. Worthy or Unworthy....	122
SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. False Friends.....	126
EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. A Trustworthy Servant	129
NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. If Jesus Appeared in Our Church	132
TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. Judgment—Right or Wrong	135
ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. An Abomination.....	138
TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. True to God.....	141
THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. Ingratitude.....	144
FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. Dumb Creatures Preach	147
FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. In God We Trust..	151
SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. On Ahead.....	153
SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. Your Loyalty.....	156
EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. The Greatest Evil..	159
NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. A Great Choice...	162
TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. Our Parents.....	165
TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. Hardhearted Chil- dren	168
TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. Our Duty to God	171
TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. Our Duty to Our Neighbor	176
LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. Before the Judge.....	181

INTRODUCTION

Bible stories always appeal to children. These Sermonettes portray certain types of the heroes of God very familiar to children of the parochial schools. A short sketch of their deeds in harmony with the subject of the Gospel of the Sunday cannot but leave some pious thoughts and cause some resolutions in the mind and hearts of the youthful listeners.

The first printing of the Bible-Story Sermonettes appeared in *The Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, during the years 1923 and 1924.

FREDERICK A. REUTER

BIBLE STORY SERMONETTES

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

A SERIOUS WORD

"And that knowing the season; that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep" (Rom., xiii. 11).

The story read in the Gospel of to-day is a serious word spoken by the Church. In preparation for the Feast of Christmas, we must endeavor to make ourselves worthy of receiving the Infant Jesus, by purging our souls of the slightest affection of sin, so that we will be acceptable to Him.

Advent is a season during which we should devote ourselves in an especial manner to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, in order that we may learn how best to prepare ourselves for the Coming of our Redeemer. I know a boy who, during the holy season of Advent, thought only of the gifts and toys he would be given on Christmas Day. He did not remember once that Christmas is primarily the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, and only by popular custom a day on which gifts are exchanged.

Among the boys and girls before me, there may also be some who are so worldly as to think only of toys in connection with Christmas. To them I would say that

their immortal souls should be the subject of their deepest consideration. How did St. John Berchmans and St. Agnes prepare themselves for Christmas, when they were children? Every night before retiring, they would make a thorough examination of conscience and ask God's pardon for any little faults they had committed during the day. As the Feast of Christmas grew nearer, they devoted themselves with renewed vigor to their studies and devotions. You see, they wished the Infant Christ to find them worthy of Him on the blessed day of His Birth. All children should do likewise, if they wish to be able to welcome our divine Lord on Christmas Day with a sincere love that will bring them happiness. During this season of Advent you should do kind acts whenever the opportunity presents itself; you should mortify yourselves, for instance, by refraining from eating candy, remembering the needy circumstances under which our Lord was born. You should make frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament; you should prepare to make someone who is less fortunate than yourselves happy at Christmas, by presenting him or her with some little useful article. These are all acts that will increase your worthiness in God's sight.

It is your duty to instill virtue in your hearts. While you are young, you must acquire the habit of performing good acts. Begin this very day. Say to yourself now: "I will be very attentive and devout during Holy Mass. I will not look about me, or talk, but will remember that Holy Mass is the renewal of the Sacrifice on Calvary." When you go home, practise loving obedience to your parents. Help your mother as much as you can, and be courteous and cheerful with your father, brothers and sisters. In school, obey your teacher and try faithfully to carry out the instructions given you. You will find, if

you do all these things, that you will be very happy when Christmas arrives, and it will be for you a joyful Christmas Day.

From day to day enrich your souls and increase virtue in your hearts. You have all read in your Bible History of the little boy, Samuel. Anna, his mother, a pious woman, asked God to send her a baby boy. When he was born, she named him Samuel, which means "asked of God."

Anna had made a promise to God that Samuel should serve the Almighty Father all his life, and she meant to keep it. Dearly as she desired Samuel to be with her, it was her greater desire that he should dwell in the House of God. So the mother gave her boy to a priest, who lived in a room on one side of the temple. Samuel was given a room on the opposite side of the temple. His duties were to open the doors of the temple in the morning, to close them at night, and to care for the lamp which hung in the temple.

One night he lay down to sleep. Eli, the priest, had also retired for the night. The church was very quiet and dark, with only the lamp burning dimly. Suddenly a Voice rang out in the church, calling: "Samuel!" And the boy in his room heard it and answered: "Here I am." Then he ran to Eli's room, calling: "Here I am, for thou callest me." He thought the Voice had been Eli's. But Eli said: "I called not; lie down again." And Samuel went back to his room.

Again hearing his name called, he went to Eli and said: "Here I am, for thou callest me." And Eli answered as before: "I called thee not; lie down again."

When he was again in his room, the Voice once more called "Samuel!" This time when the boy ran to Eli, the high priest knew that it was God calling. Therefore,

he said: "Go lie down; and if He call thee, say: 'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.'" So once again Samuel lay down, and the Lord's Voice came as before. Samuel answered: "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Then God spoke and told him what He would have him do. God, our Creator, spoke to Samuel! How wonderful! But you must remember that Samuel was a good boy, faithful to his duties, and obedient to the Commandments of God. That was why God had such an especially tender love for him, and why He spoke to him.

If Samuel had lived in the Christian era, with what great care would he prepare for the Feast of Christmas! He would be obedient and self-sacrificing in order to please God, who especially loves those of His children who try to make themselves pleasing to Him.

Let us remember that the best gift on Christmas Day is not something that we have been presented with by our parents or friends. Our most precious gift is Christ, the Infant Saviour, who became Man to save the world. Let us remember that He came down to us, and endured the cold and suffering of the manger in Bethlehem in order that mankind might be saved from eternal damnation. His love is the greatest gift that we can receive on Christmas Day, but we must deserve it. We must be clean of heart and soul, if we wish to secure Christ's love. So let us mortify ourselves, and prepare ourselves during the season of Advent, for the coming of the Infant Christ, in order that He may bestow upon us the heavenly blessing of His love.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

MORAL COURAGE

"But what went you out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?" (Matt., xi. 7).

In ancient times, Jerusalem was one of the greatest cities of the known world. One day the people of Jerusalem learned that a strange man had appeared in the desert near the city. His garment was made of coarse camel's hair, held by a girdle around his waist. His food consisted of locusts and the honey of wild bees which he found in the wilderness.

This man was John the Baptist, whom God now commanded to go out from the desert and prepare the people for the Coming of the Saviour. The Baptist went to the towns and preached, exhorting young and old to repent of their sins and make ready the way of the Lord. Good people came many miles to hear John. He was greatly admired, and many thought that he was the promised Messias.

The Pharisees, who were rich and considered themselves better than other men, came one day to hear John preach. He addressed them very sternly, saying: "Do penance, ye vipers, or ye shall be the first to feel God's judgments." The people were surprised to hear the Baptist use such severe language. No one had ever before dared to accuse the Pharisees of sin.

John the Baptist went to the Court of Herod, and

there upbraided the king for his life of sin. The king became furious at this, and ordered the preacher of God cast into prison. But John had no fear, because he knew that he had spoken the truth, and that God would not desert him in the hour of trial.

It is a good thing to meditate upon the life of St. John, in order to determine whether we, like the great preacher, are faithful to the truth. Do we do with determination what we consider to be right? When we are convinced of the wrong of a certain action, can anyone persuade us to commit that action or take part in it?

A boy named Fred was once sent by his mother to church on Sunday, with the special injunction that he was to pray for his sick father. He was a weak boy, and on the way to church he met a young friend of his who persuaded him not to go to Mass. "Come on," said his friend, "let's go over and play ball. It's such a fine day, and nobody will miss you in church." Fred knew that it was his duty to go to Mass, and he realized that he had an especial reason for hearing Mass, since his father was very sick and needed the benefit of his prayers. But Fred was afraid to say "No!" to his chum. So he went over to play ball. He did not go to Mass, as he should have. In his heart he had probably the desire to do right, but he was afraid to speak out and to face his friend's displeasure. What shame will torture that boy later when he realizes his callous indifference and ingratitude towards God and the father to whom he owes so much!

Rest assured that Jesus loves virtuous boys and girls, who desire nothing so much as to please Him. And remember that our blessed Lord is offended by boys and girls who weakly submit to temptations, and do not carry out His Commandments and the Commandments of His Church. Children who steal, who lie, who are not devout

and respectful in church, who are disobedient to their parents and superiors, who stay away from Sunday Mass, all offend our Lord, and are ungrateful to Him for the many blessings and gifts He bestows upon them. Such children are traitors to His love. They do not appreciate the sufferings Christ endured for the salvation of the world. They do not love the Passion and Death of Christ as they should.

It is well to remind ourselves often of the faithfulness of John the Baptist to his God. He never once deserted his Master, but, on the contrary, he was ever anxious to serve Him better. He appreciated the wonderful blessings that God had bestowed upon Him, and, although he had neither wealth nor luxuries, he was supremely happy in doing God's bidding. Why? Because he was good; because he did right and avoided wrong; because he was charitable and devoted to the love of God. We should imitate John the Baptist, and should endeavor always to perfect ourselves in goodness and virtue. If we do so, we may hope to be one day among those in Heaven who are near to God.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

GOD'S FAVORITE

"Let your modesty be known to all men" (Phil., iv. 5).

The Gospel of to-day treats of the great lesson in modesty and humility to be learned from the life of St. John the Baptist. These are two of the greatest virtues, as we learn from the life of our Saviour, and we should practise them very earnestly.

While you are very young, you desire to be thought of favorably by teachers, parents and friends, you delight in having praise and honor lavished upon you. When you get older, you will learn that there are many people in this world who would gladly sacrifice their honors, if they might, in return, be favored with Christian happiness.

Consider the story of the peasant boy who lived near a king's palace. One evening this peasant boy, after an unusually hard day in the fields, looked up at the great palace walls with envy. "I wish I were a king!" said he. "For then I would have riches, servants and honòr." And the king, who was at the same time standing on a balcony of the palace, and saw the peasant boy standing at his cottage door, said: "How I wish I were that boy, carefree and contented! He has no troubles to bother him, none who are constantly planning to deprive him of his crown, none to disturb his sleep and to threaten him with death!"

Honors are never what they seem, and cannot make us perfectly happy. We may desire them, but, after they

have been secured, we find that we do not want them. A certain English king always had a curtain drawn before him whenever a minister of state paid a visit. "I do not want to see his head bow to me," he explained. "He does not, in his heart, honor me. It is only an outward appearance of respect that he assumes."

When we come to die, what good will the fact do us that people bowed and scraped to us and flattered us? Will it help to form God's judgment of us? Will it secure for us a high place in Heaven? It will not! The peasant boy, in his rude coffin, is the equal of the king on his canopied bier. Both are, before God, human beings, made to His image and created brothers. That the king was the recipient of honor during his life, will not make any difference to God except to increase his responsibility.

Again, there are even greater things in this life than honors, although few people seem to think so. Do you not think that the beggar, who is spurned by men but who is looked on very favorably by God, is really happier than any man who possesses only worldly honor? Any one who adorns his soul with good works and mortifications, who develops in himself a sincere love of God and a hatred of sin, is one of God's favorites and experiences much greater happiness than does he who is without a clean conscience, and who has lavished upon him nothing but earthly praise. St. John the Baptist is a splendid example of one who is a favorite of God. Though he was not a favorite of wicked kings, he was held in respect and love by the poor. He would have none of the praise that is so valued by human beings. We would do well to imitate St. John by acquiring the virtue of humility, which is the groundwork and foundation of a truly Christian life.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

HAPPINESS AND UNHAPPINESS

"Drop down dew, ye heavens from above, and let clouds rain the just" (Is., xlv. 8).

In Judea there once lived a great man of God, named Isaias, whom God had sent as a prophet to preach to the Israelites. But, though he fulfilled his commission well and was devoted to the welfare of the people, they would not respect his teachings. They refused to accept the Word of God. The people adhered to paganism, and would not believe in the true God. Even then, the Almighty Father willed to forgive them if they would return to Him in sincere repentance. However, they were a wicked people, and spurned the love of God.

It was over nineteen hundred years ago that the Christ Child was brought into the world. Many of the people of Judea, when they heard of the Coming of their King, were very happy, for they knew that He was the promised Messias. And many of the people repented of their sins, because their hearts were filled with love at the announcement of the Coming of their King. The Christ Child brought love into the world.

On Christmas Day, every truly Christian heart experiences transports of joy and happiness, for the Infant Christ has come with His spiritual blessings and favors. He has come to lighten the burden of the aged, to comfort the sick, to place His loving hand on the head of the poor boy and the poor girl.

And the holy Child, from His cold manger, exhorts those who are blessed with riches and material things to share with their less fortunate brothers in Christ what they have been given by God. He desires that the wealthy be charitable to the poor; that the well-to-do boys and girls present their less fortunate friends with little gifts that will help to make Christmas Day happy for all.

Remember always that God bestows wealth upon certain people in the world in order that they may alleviate the need of others. Everyone can secure for himself spiritual happiness and comfort; but there are many in the world, the invalid, the sick, the crippled, who are dependent upon the generosity of others to provide them with those things of material life that give comfort to the body. Those whose lives are comfortable, should see to it that the poor are made happy on Christmas Day. It is the duty which God imposes when he bestows riches, and it is a duty which people who are well-to-do must perform. On Christmas Day, the Infant Saviour brings spiritual happiness into the world, and He wishes us to imitate Him in the best way we can, by bestowing happiness on others out of the wealth that God may have given us.

FEAST OF CHRISTMAS

THE THREE SHEPHERDS

"And they came with haste; and they found Mary and Joseph, and the Infant lying in the manger" (Luke, ii. 16).

Among all the narratives that have come down to us from other days, the most beautiful is the Gospel record of the incidents accompanying the Redeemer's birth—the simple story of the first Christmas in Bethlehem of Juda. Briefly, directly, vividly, St. Luke recounts the greatest event that has ever occurred since the creation of the world. Let us examine once again a portion of that touching narrative.

"And she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped Him up in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

"And there were in the same country shepherds watching, and keeping the night watches over their flock. And behold an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them: 'Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people. For this day is born to you a Saviour who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you: you shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.'

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying: 'Glory to

God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of goodwill.' And it came to pass that, after the angels departed from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another: 'Let us go over to Bethlehem; and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord had showed to us.' And they came with haste; and they found Mary and Joseph, and the Infant lying in the manger."

Happy Shepherds, thus admitted to the privilege of being among the very first to offer the tribute of adoration to the new-born Saviour! Among the Christians that read the beautiful story now, who does not envy their singularly blessed lot? Who is not interested in their personality, in the reason for their presence on the star-lit hilltops at midnight in the depth of winter? Who is not curious as to their number, their career subsequent to the signal favor granted them—any details, in a word, relative to the first earthly adorers, apart from Mary and Joseph, of the glorious mystery of the Nativity of Jesus Christ?

At the time of our Saviour's birth the pastures around Bethlehem were still as fertile as when, centuries before, David had tended his sheep thereon. Numerous flocks still covered the hillsides and lowlands; and, to protect them from Arabian robbers or from ferocious beasts (such as wolves or bears), sentinel shepherds were placed on guard. Here and there throughout the pasture lands arose towers of varying strength and height, serving at once as a refuge for the guards and a retreat for the flocks during inclement weather.

In Palestine, as in many other Oriental countries, cattle and sheep not only spend the nights in the field: they even winter there. This custom is not unusual in the countries of Southern Europe. On the Roman Campagna herds

may be seen all winter, passing the days and nights also in the open air.

Vigilance was, of course, more necessary among the shepherds during the night than in broad daylight. Both wild beasts and robbers would naturally prefer the hours of darkness for theft and murder among the flocks. The Scriptural phrase, "the night watches," seems to imply that the shepherds relieved one another after watches of three hours each. The watches would thus run from six o'clock till nine, from nine till midnight, from midnight till three, and from three till six.

To the fortunate shepherds who held the third watch on that first Christmas night, the Archangel Gabriel, descending from heaven swifter than the lightning and more radiant than the sun, presented himself, announcing the word so ardently desired for four thousand years: "This day is born to you a Saviour." Thus, in the majestic silence of an Oriental night was verified the magnificent poetry of Solomon: "For while all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, Thy Almighty Word leaped down from heaven, from Thy royal throne, as a fierce conqueror into the midst of the land of destruction" (Wisdom, xviii. 14-15).

That there were many shepherds in and around Bethlehem, is clear from the number of flocks that pastured in its fertile valleys, plains and hillsides. How many of them were called to adore the new-born King? The Incarnate Word had accomplished the redemption of angels—of angels whom He had preserved from a fall. Already the angelic world surrounded His manger-cradle, triumphing in His birth. There remained humanity to offer its homage. The three races sprung from the three sons of Noe should be represented in a mystery accom-

plished for all. The same signification that exists in the sacred number of the Magi holds good herein ; hence, it is said that there were three shepherds.

All tradition points to the same conclusion. The oldest chronicles—the engraved stones of the Catacombs, the headpieces on Oriental manuscripts of great antiquity—invariably attest it. Three shepherds, and only three, are found represented on the stone coffins of the Christians of ancient Rome. The paintings and the inscriptions relative to the birth of Christ clearly show that, in the belief of the first Christians, only three shepherds came to the Crib in Bethlehem to adore the Infant God. We see, in truth, that their pious hands took care to represent three, and never a greater number.

Perpetuated from age to age by written or sculptured monuments, the tradition of the three shepherds was some years ago revived annually in Rome, the city of traditions. At the beginning of Advent, when the Eternal City was under Papal rule, the shepherds of the Sabine hills descended from their mountains, and, marching through the streets in their simple yet colorful costume, announced to the strains of rustic music the approaching birth of the Child of Bethlehem. Although in considerable numbers, they ever walked three abreast—an old man, a middle-aged one, and a youth.

That these favored among all earth's children on that December night nineteen centuries ago were Saints, is the common opinion in both Eastern and Western Churches. And it is certainly a doctrine presenting no difficulty to a fervent Christian. The virtues which won for them their magnificent privilege could not but have been intensified and enhanced by their contact with the Infant Son of Mary ; and the memory of that midnight scene, remarkable amidst all the occurrences that the earth has ever

witnessed, must have dwelled with them throughout their lives, a source of continuous joy and a recompense of final perseverance. Simplicity, humility and candor are the traits of character of the shepherds that serve as an example for us. To the meek and humble of heart Jesus loves to manifest Himself now as on the winter's night when celestial voices filled the air around the watch tower.

The shepherds who watched on the star-lit slopes that night in the long ago, were but simple men, of whose fears or hopes the world cared not to know ; but only the shepherd heard the song that rolled through the purple skies, and only the truly humble may join the throng around the Crib where the Man-God lies.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS

PERSEVERANCE

"They carried Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord"
(Luke, ii. 22).

The Gospel of this Sunday is the very same as the one read on the day of the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple. This feast the Church celebrates on the second of February. According to the Jewish Law given to Moses, every first-born boy was to be presented to God. The parents had also "to offer a sacrifice, according as it is written in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons."

And after the days of the purification of Mary were accomplished, according to the Law of Moses, they carried Jesus to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord, and to offer a sacrifice according as it is written in the Law of the Lord.

See the Jewish mothers making their way up the Temple steps, their babes in their arms. Hear the bleating of the lambs, the cooing of the doves. See the Blessed Mother and her divine Child, with St. Joseph by her side holding the wicker cage with the doves and five shekels for the redemption of the Child. Look at the face of Mary at the moment she offers her Son to God.

Mary gave a gift to God such as had never before

been offered to Him—greater than which was impossible. And God gave her in return the assurance of a lifelong sorrow. His reward seems strange to us. Those who know God, understand His ways. Mary was not disturbed. The sudden change in her life touched neither her peace nor her trust. Mary could look forward to Easter Day, when her heart would be filled to overflowing with joy. How God loves to outdo in generosity! Who has ever regretted in the end having given Him a gift that cost!

See Mary taking the road home, her Child pressed close to her heart. She is to tend and rear Him as a lamb of sacrifice, to watch Him grow up in His loveliness, and in the fullness of His beauty to give Him up to torture and to death. And all this, my dear children, for you and for me. O Mother of God, blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus!

Mary had made the sacrifice. She had said to God: "I offer Thee Thy Son, who is also mine." She was going to descend the steps of the Temple and to take the road to Nazareth, when an old man met her. This was Simeon the Just, who was earnestly longing for the Redeemer of Israel—Simeon who had received a promise from God not to be taken out of the world before he had seen the Desired of the Nations.

Simeon had waited patiently day after day, perhaps for many years. There was nothing to show he was nearing the realization of his hopes. No angel came on the morning of the Presentation to announce the happiness that was at hand. What if that day he had failed to be where duty called him! What then, if on the morrow he had lain dying, and, complaining to God of the non-fulfillment of the promise for which he had lived, had

heard the answer: "The hour of the morning sacrifice yesterday was My hour. My Christ awaited you in the Temple, but you were not watching."

All of us have desires of higher things for ourselves and for others. We too hope and pray through long years, relying on the promise: "Ask and you shall receive" (John, xvi. 24). "Know ye that no one hath hoped in the Lord and hath been confounded" (Ecclus., ii. 11). But we must do our part, not only by desires and by prayer, but by faithful service like the aged Simeon.

What did Simeon feel as he held in his arms and pressed to his heart "the Christ of the Lord"—when his eyes saw, dimly through their tears, "the light of the Gentiles and the glory of Israel"—the same Christ we behold and embrace after Holy Communion? And, if our eyes do not behold Him, we have the assurance: "Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed." "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty." Shall not this faith and this hope enkindle something of Simeon's love? If still our hearts are cold, let us offer to Him who accepts desires as deeds the love of the old man's heart that day.

Mary was going to leave, when lo! a holy woman comes to proclaim in her turn the greatness of Jesus. In those days there was at Jerusalem a prophetess named Anna, the daughter of Phanuel. She was far advanced in years, and had been a long time a widow. This true Israelite spent her life in the Temple, praying and fasting and performing good works: the Spirit of God was with her. When she had heard the canticle of Simeon, she also began to praise God, and to speak of the Saviour to all that were expecting the salvation and redemption of Israel. Yet, what was there to draw her to the

Temple Courts? Had every day seen a Presentation of Christ as we have in our daily Mass, her diligence could easily be explained, and would have been called for. Are we zealous in going to church, and, when there, do we conduct ourselves in a becoming manner? Every morning Christ is there presented to the Father. Is not our presence and our homage called for?

Anna had no promise. But God is better than His word, as we shall find out in heaven. He loves to take us by surprise. He loves to answer even the unspoken desires of the heart. He delights to fill our cup of joy to the brim. It is not likely that such a dweller in the Temple would be unknown to a kindred spirit like Simeon's, and perhaps she knew of the promise to him and trusted to have a share in his joy, and therefore departed not from the Temple.

Anna spoke of the Child to all who looked for the redemption of Israel. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Because her heart was full of Him, she could not but speak of Him. Do we want to know of what our hearts are full? If so, let us ask ourselves of what do we love to speak.

The special fruit of the Viaticum is peace. Our Lord comes to soothe and strengthen His failing servant, to befriend him when all other friends fail, to pass with him through the dark valley of the shadow of death. He Himself is the promised salvation—the dear pledge in the Host of the near presence, the unveiled Face, the familiar intercourse that is to come.

Simeon had received an answer from the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. But he had to watch and to follow the leadings of grace, for he knew neither the day nor the hour when his Lord would come. "And he was led by

the Spirit into the Temple." Had he been unfaithful that morning, he would have missed his grace. Who knows what I may miss if through my laziness I stay away from daily Mass! That conversion, that favor I have prayed for so long, may be in store for me in some week-day Mass.

Look at Simeon holding the Divine Child in that embrace which was his First and Last Communion. Admire the fruits of the Communion as seen in the canticle: *humility*—"Thy servant"; *hope and trust*—"Thou dost dismiss in peace"; *faith*—"My eyes have seen Thy salvation"; *love*—"he took Him into his arms and blessed God." May my soul die the death of the just, the death of holy Simeon, whose life was lived for the sight of Jesus!

Do we wish to have the same happiness as Simeon and Anna? Then, let us go to the Temple, guided by the Spirit of God. We shall there find Jesus and Mary, and it will be given to us to enjoy their company and their conversation, and we shall then speak of them to all those faithful souls that expect the triumph of God's Church here on earth.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CIRCUMCISION

LOVE FOR THE HOLY NAME

"Thou shalt call His Name Jesus" (Luke, i. 31).

The Circumcision itself is the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, but this name is so wonderful that Holy Church wishes to honor it by a special feast on the following Sunday. Though the feast is of recent date, having been established for the Universal Church only in the eighteenth century, the virtue of this divine Name was proclaimed by the very Apostles.

"And the angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

"Who having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be.

"And the angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God.

"Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus."

These are the words St. Luke records in his Gospel. The holy archangel pronounces for the first time that name which rejoices heaven and earth, at the sound of which the blessed exult with joy and hell trembles. The name of Jesus signifies Redeemer, Saviour. Others bore

this name before our divine Lord; for instance, the successor of Moses, for Josue is but another form of Jesus. The writer of Ecclesiasticus also bore this name—Jesus Sirach. For both of these the name was not without significance. Josue led the chosen people into the land of promise, after journeying forty days through the desert. Jesus Sirach, by his words of wisdom, indicated the way to true happiness in time and eternity. But, since the Son of God bore on earth that name, of which St. Paul says: "In the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven, on earth, and under the earth," this name, out of reverence for the Incarnate Son of God, has never been given to another. "O Lord, our God, how admirable is Thy Name in the whole world" (Ps. viii. 2).

Newton, the great astronomer, had the deepest respect for the name of God; he uncovered his head and bowed low whenever it was uttered in his presence. Many devout Christians bow their head when they pronounce the Name of Jesus in prayer; the priest does so in celebrating Mass. St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, is said to have been the child whom Our Lord set in the midst of the disciples at the time that He said: "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven." This holy bishop loved to repeat the Name of Jesus, and shortly before his death said: "This name shall never leave my lips or be effaced from my heart." And, in fact, after his martyrdom, the Holy Name was found inscribed on his heart.

In the Litany of the Holy Name we invoke the name of Jesus again and again, because it is the most powerful of all names, and through it we can obtain all we need. "If you ask the Father anything in My name, he will give it you." By the Name of Jesus the Apostles and

Saints worked miracles. St. Peter said to the lame man at the gate of the Temple: "In the Name of Jesus Christ arise and walk." Christ promised that in His Name devils should be cast out. The devils tremble at the Name of Jesus; they take flight when they hear it, even when it is uttered by evil men, so great is its power.

The Name of Jesus is also all-powerful to fill the heart with joy. It is compared to oil; for, as oil gives light, alleviates pain, and affords nourishment, so does the Name of Jesus when we call upon it. St. Vincent Ferrer declares it to be a defence in all dangers spiritual and temporal and a means of healing bodily infirmities.

All graces are combined in this Holy Name: "There is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved." An indulgence of twenty-five days is granted for each invocation of the Holy Name, and a plenary indulgence at the hour of death for those who have frequently invoked it during life. It is necessary to pronounce the Holy Name to obtain the indulgence at the hour of death.

No one who clings to mortal sin can devoutly call on this Holy Name: "No man can say the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost" (I Cor., xii. 3). In beginning every wish, before every action however insignificant, we should call on the name of God, or make the sign of the cross, with the usual words: "All whatsoever you do, in word or in work, do all in the Name of Jesus Christ" (Col., iii. 17). Thus, we shall merit the divine blessing, and earn a reward for every action; Our Lord promises that any one who gives to another a cup of cold water in His name shall not be unrewarded.

We should also call upon the name of God in the time of trouble. He has said: "Call upon Me in the

day of trouble, I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify Me" (Ps. xlix. 15). In the year 1683 the Christians obtained a brilliant victory over the Turks; their battle-cry was the names of Jesus and Mary. In the hour of death above all we should breathe the Name of Jesus, like St. Stephen whose last words were: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

With sentiments of most tender love, the most lively joy, and the most profound respect, we ought to pronounce the Name of Jesus. Let it be our first word on awaking, and our last when going to rest. Let it lie all the night long as a seal on our lips. In our temptations, dangers, and afflictions, let us invoke the Name of Jesus; it is all-powerful to gladden the heart and to put the devil to flight.

We are bound to render homage to the Name of Jesus, not only out of gratitude, but also to obey the Eternal Father, who commanded that at this Name every knee should bend in heaven, on earth, and in hell. From this divine command is derived the most ancient custom that all the Faithful show their veneration for the Holy Name of Jesus by bowing their heads as often as they pronounce it or hear it pronounced. A pious servant of God used to exclaim: "O Divine Jesus! to Thee I commit my happiness, my life, and my death. Whatever I do, will be done under Thy protection and in Thy name. If I wake, Jesus will be before my eyes; if I sleep, I shall breathe His holy love; if I walk, it will be in the sweet company of Jesus; if I sit, Jesus will be at my side; if I study, Jesus will be my Master; if I write, Jesus will guide my pen, and my greatest treasure will be to trace His adorable Name; if I pray, Jesus will suggest my words and will mark my accents; if I be

tired, Jesus will be my rest; if I be sick, Jesus will be my doctor and comforter; if I die, it will be on the bosom of Jesus; Jesus will be my happiness, and His Name will be my epitaph."

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

OBEY GOD

"We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts, v. 29).

A little boy once was scandalized at hearing the story of the twelve-year-old boy Jesus staying in the Temple without his parents' permission. "The boy Jesus is our example of obedience," he said, "how can I imitate Him in this case?" The pastor told the little lad that Jesus had to obey someone who was greater than His parents, and that was God the Father.

My dear children, you have often been told by your pastor, your teacher and your parents, that you must learn how to be obedient. To-day I am going to speak of cases in which you must not obey.

The evil spirit, commonly called the Devil, tries very hard to take possession of your hearts. You must learn to know his voice, for he is very cunning. He tells you not to do a thing when you ought to do it. "Do not obey your parents"; "go into the pantry and steal anything you like, nobody will see you"; "do not go to Mass to-day, stay at home and play." These are his words. You need not obey him; indeed, you must refuse to obey him.

Again, you need not obey your companions and friends. Many of them are often the devil's agents. One will say to you: "Come, I know a good place to steal, nobody will know about it." You must disobey him and say: "*I will not.*" Sometimes older and grown-up folks want to teach

you sinful things. If they tell you to do such things, you must disregard their command and refuse even to listen to them.

My dear boys and girls, sometimes, alas! even parents have forgotten God so far as to command their children to sin against God and His Church. In such an event, you must go to your father and mother and say: "Dear parents, that is against the law of God. I wish to obey you in everything, but what you now command is sinful. I would rather be punished by you than receive an eternal punishment from God."

The Lord is greater than your parents. You will not commit a sin, if you are disobedient to men in order to do what God wants you to do. What God wants us to do, must be done without any faltering on our part. He is the highest Ruler; kings and emperors, popes and bishops, all must obey Him.

Darius, the pagan King of the Medes, made Daniel, who was a captive of the tribe of Judah, chief of all the presidents and princes who were set over his people, because of his goodness and wisdom. The princes hated Daniel because he was greater than they, and they tried to discover some evil concerning him. But Daniel was honest and faithful. Then they formed a wicked plan. Since the enemies of Daniel found him praying to the true God, they passed a law declaring that anyone who-soever that should pray to God or to a man for thirty days, except to Darius the king, should be cast into a den of lions. The king was flattered to think that everyone in the city would be praying to him, as if he were a great god.

Daniel heard about the law. Nevertheless, he went into his own house, and, kneeling down, prayed and gave thanks to the true God. He was not ashamed to have

anybody see him praying, neither was he afraid. The princes, who were watching, saw Daniel kneeling beside the open window, and, having heard his voice raised in prayer, they hurried to the king. They accused Daniel of not obeying the law which they had made, and declared that he prayed and asked help of his God three times a day.

When the king learned this, he was very unhappy, for he loved Daniel and had not dreamed that, in signing the decree, he should harm his friend. So Daniel was brought to a great cage of angry, roaring lions. The king's lions were very wild and very hungry, and, when the soldiers brought Daniel to the cage, the lions roared furiously. The cage was opened from above, and Daniel was thrown right in the midst of the savage animals. Very sadly the king stood by and saw it done, and then a ray of hope came to him, and he said to Daniel: "Thy God whom thou always servest, He will deliver thee."

A great stone was brought, and a lid was put on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with sealing wax and with his own ring. Then the king went home to his palace, but he would eat no food, and passed the night fasting. Early in the morning he got up and hurried to the den of lions. When he arrived there, he cried with a mournful voice unto Daniel: "O Daniel, servant of the living God, hath thy God, whom thou servest always, been able to deliver thee from the lions?" Then said Daniel to the king: "O King, live for ever. My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut up the mouths of the lions and they have not hurt me, because I have not sinned against Him; and also unto thee, O King, have I done no wrong."

The king was filled with gladness, and called his servants to come and open the den and to take Daniel from it.

So Daniel came out. There was not even a scratch upon him, because he had obeyed and trusted his God.

And the king commanded that the men who had spoken against Daniel should be seized and cast into the den of lions—their children, and their wives. The lions leaping up seized them in the air, and broke all their bones as soon as they came to the bottom of the den. And King Darius made a new law, that all in his kingdom should serve the God of Daniel. For He is the living God; His kingdom is the one that shall not be destroyed, and His power shall never end.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

A CHILD'S PASTIME

"Rejoice in the Lord always" (Philip., iv. 4).

Jesus went into the city of Cana, which is in the part of the Holy Land called Galilee. There was a marriage in the city; the Mother of Jesus was there, and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the marriage. A feast was made ready for all who should come. Food was prepared for them to eat, and wine for them to drink; but before the end of the feast the wine was all gone. When they wanted more, the Mother of Jesus said to Him: "They have no wine." Then she said to the servants: "Whatever He shall say to you, do ye."

Now there were in the house six pots made of stone, such as the Jews kept to hold water. Jesus said to the servants: "Fill the water-pots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. Then He said: "Take some out now, and carry it to the chief man of the feast." And when they did so, the water was changed into wine. But the chief man, or ruler of the feast, did not know that Jesus had changed it into wine, though the servants knew; therefore, when he tasted the water which was made wine, he called the bridegroom to him and said: "Other persons, when they give a feast, set the good wine on the table first, and after men have had enough, they bring out that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now." This was the first miracle that Jesus performed to show His power to the people. And,

when His disciples saw it, they believed that He was the Son of God.

The marriage feast at Cana reminds me of your happiest time, and that is playtime. In school you are all anxious to hear the recess bell. Every pupil is wide awake, even those who have been feeling somewhat sick. All the aches and pains are gone, for now is playtime. Games and sports have such a hold on children that they forget their home-work, their parents, their meals, and even their sleep. There are no lazy children when playtime comes. Some boys and girls want to play all the time.

When Jesus was a boy, He lived in a very beautiful country. There was the village of Nazareth, the home of Mary and Joseph. It was a quiet place, with many gardens scattered among the small houses, and a clear fountain situated in the center of the place. Jesus played with the children of Nazareth, sometimes around the fountain, while at other times He climbed with them to the top of the green hill on which the town was built.

But most of the time He was at home helping His mother, or working at the carpenter's bench with His foster-father, St. Joseph. In the evening He walked to the fountain with His mother, carrying a brown water pitcher on His shoulders.

So Jesus grew up tall and strong and good. He learned many things from Joseph and Mary, and from the people of the country around His home. Everyone loved Him and liked to be with Him.

The good Lord never forbade pleasures and enjoyments. His divine presence at the marriage feast in Cana is proof enough that He approved of merriment. By His presence at this feast, He wanted to impress upon all that the right kind of pleasure and pastime was allowed.

Since God, my dear children, permits recreation and pleasant pastimes, you must never forget that He sees and watches you at play. Play that is sinful or leads to sin, will be punished by God. Some boys find much pleasure in teasing other children, in ridiculing old people, in torturing and molesting animals. That is really sinful, and should never be done by any Catholic boy or girl.

While you are at play, you must not forget God or your duty. Remember that your duty and your little chores at home must come before play. No matter who entices you to join in a game, when duty calls you, you must leave your companion and do your work. When the big bell in the church calls you to Holy Mass or instructions, or the school bell rings for class, you must leave your play and do your duty.

Your great object in life must be to work in the service of God. "What shall I do when I am a man or a woman?" is a thought that should enter your minds once in a while. Do you know the story of the cricket and the ant? All summer the cricket chirped and wasted her time, whilst the ant was busy preparing for the winter; so, when the cold weather came, the cricket had nothing stored up and was starving, while the ant had plenty.

After you have grown older, you will be glad that you can work, and you will be thankful to your parents that they obliged you to do little chores at home to prepare you for the tasks of later life.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

A WEAK POINT

"I will, be thou made clean" (Matt., viii. 3).

In curing the leper, our dear Lord said: "I will, be thou made clean." These two words "*I Will*" are often falsely construed by boys and girls.

Harry, a little boy, often gave his mother much worry. His byword was always: "*I cannot, I cannot do it.*" In the evening, when he was to do his home-work, he would cry out: "Mother, help me, I cannot do this lesson."

His mother always called him in the morning to go to Holy Mass with the rest of the children, but he would say: "*I cannot get up.*" He was a bright boy and otherwise a good boy, but with it all a lazy boy. He went to college, but, on account of his low marks, he was sent home.

Harry was not successful at any trade. He lived the life of a beggar, and finally died a beggar in a hospital. His slogan: "*I cannot and I will not,*" was his ruin.

I see many a Harry among you, boys and girls, right here. How many times have you not said: "I cannot"? In the morning, when mother sent you to school, she told you to be quiet in church, to be obedient and attentive in school; but you say: "I cannot." Very often the priest has told you to stop cursing and pilfering. Do not many of you answer: "I cannot overcome myself!"

As often as you say: "I cannot," you are telling a lie. You have never tried very hard. You have never put your ability to a test in trying to correct yourself of cursing or swearing. You simply mean: "I do not want to, I will not exert myself!"

It is a shame and disgrace for any boy or girl to say: "I *cannot* do this exercise"; "I *cannot* get up in the morning." Did you ever observe an ant-hill? See, how the little ants live and labor. Every ant has something to do. Far off from the little hill you see a tiny ant tussling with a bit of food actually larger than itself, trying to pull it to the ant-hill. After having failed three or four times, it at last succeeds. The ants put you to shame.

Children, whenever you say "I cannot," there is very little hope for your future. Do you think that your work will become easier? Not in the least. There will be a great deal expected from you, when you will have to make your own living in the world. There will be a time when you cannot call on mother for help. Now you must learn to act and to do; in after life it will be too late.

Do you remember the story of John, who wanted to become a tailor? The needle did not suit him, for the point was too sharp. He wanted to become a blacksmith, but the hammer was too heavy. He always had some excuse, and finally he became a burden to everyone.

The great men of the world, who accomplished great tasks as inventors or discoverers, never succeeded the first time. We should have no steamships, no railroad trains, no aeroplanes, if they had not tried over and over again.

Emperor Napoleon told his soldiers: "Everyone of you, even the youngest soldier and the poorest peasant-boy, can become a general, if you only will it."

Children, it is in your power to be great, if you only will it. Resolve to-day never again to say "*I cannot*," but "*I will*."

There is a beautiful character in the Old Testament, who is also a model for Christian children. Her name is Ruth. One day her mother-in-law, who was a widow grown quite old, rose up to go to Bethlehem, the land of her birth. On leave-taking, Ruth would not part from her: "Entreat me not to leave thee," said Ruth, "for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou livest, I will live; thy friends shall be my friends, and thy God my God. I am young and strong, you are old and sad; I will go with you and take care of you as long as we both live."

So they travelled on together over hills and across plains, in the sun and rain, sleeping under the canopy of heaven with the stars twinkling overhead. Ruth left Noemi in a little house they found, and went out into the barley fields. It was at the beginning of the barley harvest, when the people were cutting their grain, that Ruth and Noemi came to Bethlehem. In the fields there were men with sickles, who mowed the grain, and women who gathered it up in bundles. Poor people sometimes walked after the women, and picked up what they dropped. Ruth followed them, picking up pieces of the long yellow stalks. It was hard work. But she thought of poor Noemi, who was hungry, and therefore did not mind how tired and hot she grew, but worked on cheerfully.

The master came in the evening and raised his hand and said: "The Lord be with thee." And all men and women in the field answered: "The Lord bless thee." Then the master saw Ruth. The master was told that the young girl had left family and friends and come here to

take care of the poor, sad woman, Noemi. The owner of the fields called Ruth to him, and told her to come every day and pick up the barley which was dropped. And he continued to say: "I know how thou hast left thy father and thy mother and thy home to take care of a poor, sad woman. May the Lord bless thee and reward thee!"

So, day after day, Ruth came to gather grain. She lived with Noemi, and each night she brought the barley she had gathered, and made it into bread for them. The owner saw how good she was and how hard she worked for Noemi, and one day he asked her to marry him, and to bring Noemi to live in his big, comfortable home.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

FORGET AND FORGIVE

"He who loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law" (Rom., xiii. 8).

Just after Christmas, my dear children, the Church celebrated the Feast of St. Stephen. This Saint was a deacon and the first martyr. He not only took care of the poor, but he preached to the people and did great miracles among them. Some of the Jews who would not believe, being angry, took him before the Council. And, because he told men the truth, they were filled with rage against Stephen, and snarled at him like wild beasts. But he, looking up towards heaven, saw a glorious light there, and beheld Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said: "I see the heavens opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." Then the people cried out with loud voices against him, and stopped their ears that they might not hear his words; and they brought him out of the city, and stoned him. While they were stoning him, he knelt down on the ground and prayed, saying: "Lord, forgive them for this sin."

Two boys, who had been great friends, got into an argument, and they soon began to fight. The boy who was beaten cried out: "I will never forgive you!" You may perhaps often have said the same. There may be a boy or a girl who likes to make fun of you. You resolve

never to talk to him or her again. A little hatred has sprung up in your heart against the one or the other.

Some of your companions have started a game, and none of them wants you as a partner. They brush you aside. You are tempted to look for a chance to revenge yourself, and you say to yourself that you will never forget or forgive.

In the Bible we read of a wealthy ruler whose name was Joseph of Egypt. King Pharaoh himself honored Joseph by taking off his ring from his hand and putting it on Joseph's finger, by dressing him in rich clothing and putting a gold chain about his neck, and by having him ride also in the chariot next to the king's chariot. Pharaoh gave him a beautiful home with a large park around it, a stable full of horses, beautiful clothes, and much money. All the orders of the new ruler were obeyed throughout the land.

You all know that he was the young man of whom some years before his brothers had become jealous, and whom they wanted to kill, but finally decided on selling to merchants on their way to Egypt. And, because Joseph was good, God was with him throughout all his hardships.

Joseph's brothers thought that he was dead. Without any thought of ever seeing him again, the ten brothers started out for Egypt, with their empty sacks and their little donkeys, to buy corn.

You remember that, when the brothers reached Egypt, they were taken to the ruler who sold the corn. But at first they did not know that this great man in fine clothes was the boy whom they had sold to the camel drivers so many years before. When they came into the large room where he was, they bowed down to the earth before him. Then Joseph saw them, and knew who they were.

This was his chance if he wanted to punish those brothers who had treated him so cruelly. They were hungry now, bowing before him and asking for food. If he refused to give it to them, it would punish them for the time when he, a boy, had begged them with tears not to sell him to the camel drivers, and not to send him away from his father and his home. But God was always with him, and, when we realize that God is near us, we cannot be unforgiving or mean; we must be good and loving. Joseph, thus, forgave his brothers and fed them.

Children, would you have acted as Joseph did? I am afraid that some boys and girls of our day would have looked down upon the brothers of Joseph, and made them feel very small; perhaps, out of sweet revenge, they would have sent them away.

None of you, my dear children, ever met with such heartless conduct as poor Joseph. On that account it ought to be easier for you to forgive. Perhaps within the next few days some companion will tease and anger you. Will you strike back at him and not forgive his rash conduct? No, like Joseph, you will forget it. You will not retire that night with a spark of enmity in your heart. And you will do more than that. The next time you are invited to play with your companion, you will do it with great pleasure. When you are in church, pray for him; imitate our Lord on the Cross, who prayed for His enemies, and St. Stephen who prayed for those who stoned him to death.

If you forgive and forget, you are a child of God. God in His infinite goodness acts just like that. You have often offended Him, perhaps by cursing, swearing and disobedience. From day to day, you enjoy the gifts of God; your meals, light and air, your good parents, and

all good things. And, even if you have offended God all your lifetime, He is ready to forgive you, if you only ask His pardon, and be sorry for your sins. Will you then refuse to forgive some slight injury?

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

THOSE GRAY WHITE YEARS

"Rise up before the hoary head, and honor the person of the aged man" (Lev., xix. 32).

Wherever the Infant Jesus went, there was happiness and joy. Forty days after the child was born, Mary and Joseph went to the Temple with their new-born Babe. They wanted to give thanks to God for the great favor, and they offered a pair of pigeons as a gift to God.

In Jerusalem there lived an old man with long, white, silvery hair and a gray beard. He was partially blind. His name was Simeon. He was a good man, who feared God, and who was expecting Jesus to come into the world, because of what the prophets had written about Him. The Holy Spirit had promised Simeon that he should not die until he had seen Jesus. And now the Holy Spirit told Simeon to go into the Temple. When Joseph and Mary brought in the Child, Simeon took Him up into his arms, and he began to pray: "Now, O Lord, Thou dost dismiss Thy servant in peace."

And there was a woman named Anna, a prophetess. She was a widow of great age, who lived near the Temple, so that she might worship there day and night. While Simeon was speaking, she also came into the Temple where Jesus was, and thanked God because He had let her see the Redeemer. Then she went out, and spoke of Him to others who were looking for the coming of the Saviour.

My dear children, many an old man and many an old woman shed tears to-day. Do you know why? Because their children are not so kind to them as Jesus was to Simeon and Anna. Our dear Lord did not despise old people. He came to them, and made them happy. Because the old people are worn and bent from age, many girls and boys laugh at them and call them names. Do you know the story of Eliseus, who was insulted one day by some rude boys? Eliseus went from Jericho to Bethel; there came forth from the city little children, who mocked him and cried after him saying: "Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head." They made sport of him, because he was bald; they told him to go up, as Elias had gone up, when God took him to heaven. Eliseus turned back, and, looking at them, he asked the Lord to punish them for their sin. Thereupon, two bears came forth from the woods and tore forty-two of the children to pieces.

Perhaps some of you have tormented or grieved old people at home. Did you ever stop to think why they have gray hair and are wrinkled? All their lives they have had worry and sorrow. Many a night they could not sleep while thinking of their children's welfare. Would you laugh at such an old man or woman? Why do they shake and tremble so? Simply because for sixty, seventy, or eighty years they have worked every day and sometimes at night, and now they are weak, tired, and exhausted. The conduct of the younger folks is often so unbecoming and so un-Christian towards the old that it unnerves them, makes them cross and peevish, and deprives them of peace in their declining years. Do you want to add to the discomfort of those who are old and feeble?

Dear children, when we meet an old man or an old

woman, let us not laugh at them or ridicule them. Let us sympathize with their frailties, and, like Jesus, try to make them happy. On meeting an old person, we will greet him. To-day we will promise the Infant Jesus always to respect the old and to do all in our power to make them happy. Boys and girls, you are growing older every day; if you show great regard for the old folks now, God will reward you when you too have gray hair and have grown feeble with advancing years.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

THE BLESSING OF TRIALS

"For whom the Lord loveth, He chastizeth" (Heb., xii. 6).

The mustard seed is very tiny, and yet it grows from a small seed into a tree upon whose branches birds build their nests. We might imagine from our Lord's description of the mustard seed that only a short time is required for it to sprout and grow into a tree, but such is not the case. From the seed grows a tender sprout which must force its way through the crust of soil to gain sunlight. Then it is subject to cold and heat, and only after surviving many dangers does it reach its full growth. We may learn a lesson from this little plant that weathers the cold and heat and that develops in spite of adversity.

Yours may be a large family. During the periods of poor business, your father may have been temporarily without employment. If so, then you have probably learned what it is to hunger and to feel the cold.

Or perhaps your father is very strict with his children. Perhaps he permits you only a short time for play; or perhaps he always seems to desire to have you do something that you do not wish to do. He may tell you to help your mother, for instance, when you are very tired. Do not complain. Obey your father and your mother. Do it because God has commanded that you should. Do it because you wish to please God, and your father and your mother as well.

A little boy once asked me why our Lord did not ordain that all children should have rich parents. So many children must endure sorrow and physical pain in addition to being poor. My answer to his question was this: "God knows best." We must always remember that God knows everything that happens to us, and that it is His divine Will that sends affliction upon us. Our Lord wishes to see whether we will be loyal to Him even in our sorrow. He wishes to test our Faith.

In the Old Testament, there is told the story of a man named Job. God bestowed upon Job great riches—three thousand camels, seven thousand sheep, and very many servants to do his bidding. Job was the wealthiest of men in that part of the world where he lived. But, when he had enjoyed these blessings for a number of years, God sent many afflictions upon him. God allowed his riches and his children and friends and servants to be taken away from him. Job was left destitute, and with no one to console him. Then God increased his sorrow by covering his body with sores. For a long time he was in dire distress, and he asked God why he was visited with so many afflictions.

God told Job of the wonderful works of His creation, how He had made the earth, the sea and the sky, how He poured down rain from heaven and covered the earth with snow, and how He did many other things. When God had told Job of His wonderful works, He asked whether Job was able to do such things, or whether he thought himself wise enough to teach God what He should do. Then Job saw that he had sinned in finding fault with his Master, and he spoke and said: "I am wicked and have spoken things I do not understand; therefore, I repent of my sin and bow down in the dust before Thee."

After that the Lord restored Job to his former condition of life. He healed the sores on Job's body; he bestowed upon him riches, and He guided Job's children and servants and friends back to him. Job now was blessed with even greater happiness than he had ever before known, and he lived to be one hundred and forty years old.

Let us remember, boys and girls, when we experience sorrow and pain, that God is always watching over us. He visits us with afflictions to see whether or not we will place our faith and trust in Him. Let us meditate often upon the trials that He, our divine Saviour, endured, that we might be saved from eternal damnation. And most of all, let us remember that He was willing to sacrifice His life for us. Let us, therefore, be only too anxious to bear patiently our few worldly crosses for the love of Him.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

OUR LORD'S VINEYARD

"Go you also into My vineyard" (Matt., xx. 4).

Have any of you, my dear children, ever seen a vineyard? What a grand sight to see the pretty blossoms in spring time and the beautiful grapes in the Fall. But the care of a vineyard means much labor and hard work. The whole family must be busy in the field—father, mother and the grown-up children. If God blesses their hard work, there will be a good crop. The Lord has also established a very large vineyard among His creatures. Every one of us should be like a vine bearing good fruit. We should be good, pure, diligent, charitable and kind. If everybody throughout the world tries very hard to practise these virtues, God will be pleased. To have everything according to His will, the good Lord needs helpers in His vineyard.

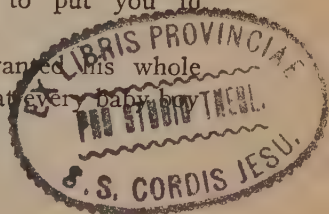
In to-day's Gospel, Jesus tells us that a certain man went to the market-place to find men to work in his vineyard. "Come, and help me," he said, "to work in my vineyard." Children, this man is God; He comes to everybody and says: "Help Me to make every person pious and good." The good God at this very minute calls on you, no matter how small you are: "Child, help Me make My vineyard very beautiful. Come and be a fellow-worker."

How can you help God in improving His vineyard?

You have a self-willed little brother at home, who does not want to obey his mother. On the quiet, you can tell your brother: "You are a naughty boy; it is not nice to disobey mother. God will be angry with you." You have a companion who is constantly cursing and swearing; at every opportunity he blasphemes God. You must call your companion's attention to his misdemeanor. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself," you must say to him, "decent people do not curse or swear. God will punish you." In church, during divine service, your neighbor wants to talk with you, wants to laugh and fool. Pay no attention to him, pray for him, and he will afterwards join you in prayer. There is a collection taken up in church or in school for the poor pagans in Africa, or India, or China. In your little bank at home you have some savings. Contribute some of that money for the poor heathen, and you will help to improve the vineyard of the Lord.

To-day we may call to mind the Children Crusaders, who left their fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, to fight the pagans in the Holy Land, where our Lord suffered and died. Their slogan was: "We will go and regain the Holy Land for the glory of God." Those good children suffered hunger and thirst and many other inconveniences. From the long journey their feet began to blister. On their way they were attacked by bad men and wild animals. Children, you are not asked to suffer the hardships of the brave little Crusaders. Wherever you are—at home, in school, or on the street—you can gain souls for God, and help to beautify the Lord's vineyard. Are the little Crusaders going to put you to shame?

There lived a wicked king, who wanted his whole country for himself. He made a law that every baby boy



born to the Hebrew mothers should be thrown into the river. The girls might be left alive, but all the boys were to be drowned. The wife of Amram gave birth to a baby boy. He was very beautiful and his mother loved him, but she feared that some of Pharaoh's servants would come and take him from her to kill him. Therefore, she hid him for three months after he was born, but then she could hide him no longer. So she took a little ark, or boat, made out of the long weeds that grew by the river, and daubed it over with pitch to keep out the water. And she put her baby into the ark, and laid it carefully among the bushes at the edge of the river. And the daughter of King Pharaoh found the little boy and exclaimed: "Surely this must be one of the Hebrew children. I will keep him for my own." He was given back to his mother, who nursed him and cared for him. When the boy was bigger, he lived in the palace of the princess, who treated him as her son, and called him Moses—which means "drawn out," because she "drew him out of the water."

After many years he became a shepherd. As he led his sheep up a mountain one day, he saw a burning bush; flames of fire came from it, and yet it was not burned up. God called to him out of the midst of this bush, saying: "Moses! Moses!" Moses answered: "Here I am." Then God said: "Put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." So Moses took them off and hid his face, for he was afraid; he was standing in the presence of God. God told Moses that He would send him to lead His people out of the land of the wicked king and to bring them into a land flowing with milk and honey. Moses was brave, and, when he told the people what had happened, they bowed their heads and praised God. Then one night Moses led his

people out of the country. By a most wonderful sign they found the way. This sign was a great high cloud, which at night turned into a pillar of fire, and was so big and bright that it gave light to all the people. God watched and took care of them; and, just as He heard their cry and came to help them, so He hears us when we pray to Him. We do not see a shining cloud, but God Himself sees us always, and loves us and takes care of us.

Franciscan Fathers
Little Falls, Minn.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

GOD'S TRACT OF LAND

"And the field is the world. And the good seed are the children of the kingdom" (Matt., xiii. 38).

After the snow has melted, the big fields are soon covered with green blades shooting up from the soil. What a grand sight is opened to our view! In our mind we see the many ears of corn waving in the autumn breeze. The farmer, whilst looking over his field, is often full of apprehension about his crops. A storm might arise and tear up all the plants. There might be a great drought and very little sunshine.

Children, every individual heart is a large field. The growth of every boy's heart and of every girl's heart is watched by someone. Your good father and your good mother are watching your heart, and so likewise are your zealous pastor and your teachers.

My dear boys and girls, when those who are placed over you think of your future, very serious thoughts fill their minds. What aim in life will you, young people, have? What will Freddy choose for his life work? What calling is Anna going to follow? Your parents will often say to themselves: "Will our Charlie become unruly and be a degenerate, bringing disgrace upon the family, and end his days in prison?" Which girl, which boy will be barred out of heaven by Almighty God? How many are there among you who disregard the kind words and

admonitions of your parents? Which child has a heart of stone or a heart hedged in by briars, preventing the good words from taking root and bearing fruit?

These questions give a great deal of worry to your parents, your pastor, and your teachers. The answer, in many cases, is very doubtful. I am sure that the majority of you children before me are good and obedient. Will you continue to be good and obedient? Many bad men and women in the world will try to mislead you. There are some among you who seem to like to be bad. A certain bad boy cannot rest until he gets into a fight; that girl is always quarrelling. Charlie is already very bold, and Catherine is disobedient and unruly to parents and teachers. Among you there are some who habitually tell lies, who steal and pilfer at home, in school, and among their friends. They are sowing the bad seed of a future thief, of a murderer, or of a robber. What kind of man or woman will you be? Will you bear good fruit, or will you be gathered up as cockle ready to burn?

I am going to tell you about two young men who brought presents to God. One was a farmer, and his name was Cain. He had a garden, and raised fruit and vegetables. The other boy, whose name was Abel, was a shepherd; he took care of sheep and goats. Each brought a present to God of what he had. Abel brought some of his little lambs, and Cain brought some fruit. Now, Abel loved to give a present to God, and his face was bright and joyful as he came with the lambs in his arms. The way he offered his victim was first to kill it, and then burn it on an altar. The altar was a pile of stones or earth, with a flat top, raised up as high as a table. He put some wood on this altar, cut and ready to burn; then he laid the lamb, after it was killed, on the wood; next he set fire to the wood, which burned the

lamb, so there was nothing left on the altar but ashes. God was pleased that Abel should worship Him in this way. The lamb was gentle and patient and innocent, and, when Abel killed it and offered it on the altar, it seemed like our Saviour, who was to come after so many years to die for our sins.

Cain's heart was wicked when he brought his offering; and God was not pleased with Cain or his gift. Then Cain was very angry; he had not been happy before, but now he went about sullenly. Yet, God spoke kindly to him, and asked why he was angry. If Cain did right, God said, He would be pleased with him; and if he did not do right, the fault was his own. Cain now hated Abel, because God was better pleased with his brother's offering. One day, Cain asked Abel to go into the field with him, and, while they were walking together, turned and killed his brother. Now God spoke to Cain again, but in a different manner. In punishment for killing Abel, He declared that Cain should be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth; that he should flee about the earth from one place to another, as a person who is always in fear, and who has no home in which to live. So Cain went away, and lived all the rest of his life away from his father and mother, a lonely and unhappy man.

Children, you have your future in your own hands. The growth of the good seed does not depend so much on heat or cold, rain or other weather conditions, as it does on the proper preparation and cultivation of the ground. If you make up your mind to be a good man or a good woman, you will be one. The Lord who is the heavenly husbandman will help you to cultivate your character, if you only show a good will. Every morning make a firm resolution that you are going to be good

and useful members of society. When you begin your studies in the morning, say to yourself: "I am going to grow up to be an excellent man. I am going to make my parents and my teachers happy. I want my parents and my teachers to be proud of me." And, if you continue in this manner, God will be pleased with you.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY

THE ROYAL ROAD

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me" (Matt., xvi. 24).

The Gospel tells us a very sad story. Our Lord is walking with His disciples on a country road towards Jerusalem. The disciples seem to be talking merrily. Our Lord is very sad. He is walking alone, ahead of the rest, looking very serious. Now He stops. "We are going to Jerusalem," He says, "remember this is the last time we shall walk together. The Jews will take Me prisoner, they will scourge Me and spit upon Me, trample Me under foot, and at last crucify Me." The Lord looked at each of His disciples. He wished to ask them whether they would go with Him along the way of the cross, or would turn back to enjoy themselves. The Apostles, however, did not leave their Master, but joined Him in His sorrow.

The Season of Lent will begin in a few days. To-day our Lord looks into the heart of every one of you, children, and He asks you the same question that He asked the Apostles centuries ago: "Child, will you not follow Me on the way of the cross? During these few days will you not share some of My sufferings?" Without hesitation all of you will answer: "Yes, dear Lord, at all times we will go with You and share Your sufferings."

During these forty days, the good Lord may send you sufferings. They may be in the form of a terrible cough, or a toothache, or some other pain. Do you remember how very peevish you are when you are sick? You are always calling for mother to help you. Children, our dear Saviour suffered greater pain. Just think of the Crown of Thorns on His head and the nails that tore apart His tender flesh! There was not one sound part on His tender body. He suffered all this with patience and without a murmur. Will you not try to imitate Him during these forty days, and suffer any pain that comes with courage and endurance? Among your companions you will find some who will give you a chance to mortify yourself. They will laugh at you or mock you; they will not let you play with them at their games; they will make you feel that you are a poor boy because you are wearing shabby clothes. Will you not bear all these taunts patiently, remembering that Jesus had to hear many harsh words and that He was crucified between two thieves? Notwithstanding all this, He was silent. During this holy season, are you not going to try to imitate Him in His silence and His forgiving spirit?

My dear boys and girls, we should look for occasions during Lent to mortify ourselves. At dinner, if you see a dish that you like very much, do not taste it. St. Rose of Lima, at the age of six, began to fast three times a week on bread and water. At table, she would request the servant to offer her only a kind of dish made without salt, a crust of coarse bread, and bitter herbs. From her infancy, she invented many means of making her bed hard. She placed a stone under her head for a pillow. Her bed was a chest which she filled with rough stones of different sizes. Jesus Christ often appeared to her, saying with a sweet and gracious countenance: "Remem-

ber, my child, that the bed of the cross on which I died for love of thee was harder, narrower, and more painful."

We read in the Holy Book of a boy who went on a long journey to a place where his grandfather had lived in his youth. Abraham was the grandfather, and his grandchild's name was Jacob. The boy must have been lonely as he started off, travelling by himself on that long road, leaving his home and friends and going to a place where he knew no one. There was not even a camel or a donkey to keep him company. He walked all that long way alone. As he journeyed, he came to a place where he stopped to rest for the night, because the sun had set. Jacob was on a stony hillside, where there were no trees to shelter him, and no soft grass upon which to lie down. He took some of the stones that were on the ground for his pillow, and, with only the starry sky above him, he fell asleep. Then a beautiful dream came to him. And he dreamt that he saw a ladder set up on the earth, with its top reaching up to heaven, and that Angels were ascending and descending it. And the Lord stood above it, and spoke to Jacob, saying that He would give the land of Canaan to him and to his descendants. And the Lord said He would be with Jacob to take care of him wherever he should go, and that He would bring him back to Canaan again.

Jacob then awoke from his sleep and was afraid, because the Lord had been there; and he rose up early in the morning and worshipped the Lord, and called the place Bethel, which means the house of God and the gate of heaven. Since God was so good to Jacob in giving him silver and gold, sheep and cattle, Jacob decided to give a tenth part of his possessions to the Lord. As he could not, however, give these things actually into the Lord's hand, he helped the poor and the sick

with them, and built altars and offered burnt offerings with them, and that was just the same as giving them into the Lord's own hands.

Children, we will promise Jesus to-day to walk along the way of the cross with Him. It is a hard and rocky road, but it is the royal road that leads to heaven.

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

PLEASURE IS SHORT-LIVED

"Who, for one mess, sold his first birthright" (Heb., xii. 16).

The Holy Bible tells us, dear children, how on one occasion Jesus was tempted. God permitted this to remind us that we shall all be tempted from time to time, and to teach us how to resist. The devil could not ensnare Jesus. He tried everything; he even promised to give Him the whole world. But our Lord would not yield to him. If we would only act as Jesus did! But alas! for a short, sinful pleasure, we sometimes give the best we have, and then repentance often comes too late.

Here is the sad story of Esau. God gave Isaac and Rebecca two sons, whose names were Jacob and Esau; Esau was the elder, and Jacob the younger. Now in those days the eldest son in the family enjoyed what was called the birthright. This made him the chief among all the children. When his father died, he would inherit more of the silver and gold and cattle that had been his father's than the other children did; he would in fact receive twice as much as any of them, because of his birthright. Esau was Isaac's eldest son, and therefore held the birthright. He was to inherit the estate, and with it the blessing of the father. This would give him the privilege of offering sacrifice to the Lord and invoking the benediction of heaven. Esau had indeed a bright future, but for the sake of a little pleasure he destroyed it all.

When Esau and Jacob grew up to be men, Esau was a hunter, and never wanted to stay at home. Early in the morning he would take his bow and arrows, and, followed by his dogs, he would go out into the fields and woods where he killed deer. He would bring the meat home to his father, because his father loved to eat it. But Jacob lived at home in a tent, and worked in the stable and in the house helping his father and mother. One evening, Esau came in from his hunting very weary and faint and feeling very hungry. At once he went into the kitchen, and threw himself on the bench to rest. Jacob was standing at the hearth, preparing some pottage. "What are you doing?" Esau asked. "I am preparing a dish of lentils," Jacob replied. Esau, in a pleading voice, said: "Please, give me some; I am tired and hungry; lentils are my favorite dish." "With pleasure," Jacob answered, "but I also ask a favor from you." "Tell me, what is it?" replied Esau excitedly. Jacob slowly explained: "Give me your birthright, and our father's blessing, the estate and God's protection." At once Esau said: "You may have it all. I will die soon and what does it matter after all!" Jacob was astonished that Esau made so little of his rights, and that he gave it away so thoughtlessly. "By the living God," Jacob cried out, "swear that all belongs to me!" And Esau lifting up his right hand solemnly swore: "As true as the good God lives in heaven, blessings and estates shall be yours." Then Jacob gave Esau the dish of lentils, and after eating Esau went to bed. On awakening in the morning, he repented of what he had done. The dish of lentils was gone and with it all the rest; his father's blessing was lost, also his home. Just for a little pleasure, he had sacrificed all the wealth, happiness and divine favors that had been destined for him.

When people hear this story, they blame Esau, and pride themselves with the idea that they would have acted differently. But among Christians there are many Esaus. Mother Eve in the garden of Paradise did not do any better. On account of eating the forbidden fruit, she was forced to leave the beautiful garden of Paradise. Judas, one of the Apostles, gave up heaven just for a few pieces of silver. Ananias dropped dead, because he deceived the Apostle by withholding some money.

Often think how foolish Esau was. Some day your mother has to go out, and you are alone at home. On the table, in the parlor, you see the money-box filled with quarters and half-dollars. You are tempted to take some of that shining silver to buy candy. You intend to have a little pleasure, but what will happen when this is all over? You will be looked upon as a thief. Your Guardian Angel will turn his face away from you, and God will take no more pleasure in you. You will lose all this, and you will have taken the first step on the road to destruction. Remember Esau!

You have a companion who is bad. He uses unbecoming language, and coaxes you to do bad things. Think of Esau, and what he sacrificed for the pleasure of a moment. What is your comrade really asking you to sacrifice? Your pure heart, your good and peaceful conscience, and perhaps heaven for all eternity.

Children, we will imitate Jesus. When the devil tries to tempt us to sin, we will say: "Depart Satan, your pleasures are short-lived and they are followed by sorrow and remorse. I do not want you." When you are thus brave in warding off the devil, your Guardian Angel will rejoice and Jesus will be pleased.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

IN GOOD COMPANY

"Lord, it is good for us to be here" (Matt., xvii. 4).

A week ago we heard how the devil took our Lord up to a very high mountain. The face of Jesus had a different expression on that day. His whole body seemed to tremble. He seemed to give way to a just anger, when the devil told Him that He could have all Jerusalem if He would kneel down and adore him.

To-day, we find our Lord again on a high mountain surrounded by three of His disciples. His appearance is quite changed; His face is shining as the sun; His eyes have a look of joy; even His garments spread a brightness which causes Peter, James and John to cover their faces. Why is our Lord so happy to-day? Because He is in such holy and good company. There was one man who was a special friend of God; Moses was his name. It was he who led the Israelites out of the land of Egypt, and who was in constant communication with God. With Moses we find Elias. He was also a great friend and servant of God. Elias destroyed the heathen gods and idols, and everywhere erected altars to the true and living God. He was taken up to heaven in a fiery chariot. The disciples were also very happy that they could be in such good company. Peter cried out: "Lord, it is good to be here; if Thou wilt, let us make three tabernacles: one for Thee, one for Moses and one for Elias."

Children, there are possibly some among you who are not happy in good company. They avoid children who are quiet and orderly, obedient and prudent. They laugh at boys and girls who do not swear or use abusive language. Many there are who feel really happy only in the company of those who are rough and uncouth. In school they prefer to be near a companion who causes disorder, or causes the teacher to become angry. In church they wish to sit next to a mischief-maker, who causes distraction to those around him. At play such children look up to those who do bad things, say bad words, and ridicule old people. It is very sad that such boys and girls exist. Remember that, when you are among bad companions, you are in the company of Satan. They are doing the same work the devil is doing.

Many years ago, I went through the factory district of a large city. There was much smoke and soot. Every house looked black and dirty, and was covered with filth. My attention was called to a new house. It was very pretty to look at. The frame work was painted white, the shutters were green, the windows were bright and clean, and the red roof glittered in the sun. It was, indeed, a great pleasure to examine this new building. A few months after, I happened to be in the same city and in the same district. This same beautiful house could hardly be distinguished from the rest. The white paint had turned black, the windows were dirty, and the roof full of soot. All the beauty and the attraction were gone.

Such is the case with every boy or girl who goes with bad companions. Your soul, washed clean by the waters of Baptism, is as attractive as the new house. In a few months that soul will be black and ugly, if you associate with wicked comrades. That must never happen to you. You do not want to be bad. You want to be a dear child

of God all your life, so that you can associate with Jesus, Moses and Elias in heaven. Do not seek bad companions, but try to associate with those who are more pious than you are.

The father of young Tobias wanted to send his son to a distant city to collect a debt. He told his son to look around for a suitable companion. Young Tobias went out to seek one, and he found a beautiful young man standing girded and ready for the road. Tobias asked the stranger if he knew the road to Rages. The young man answered: "Yes." Then Tobias brought him into the house, and, after they had both received the blessing of the good old father, they departed. At the end of the first day's journey, Tobias was tired and wished to wash his feet in the River Tigris. Whilst sitting on the bank of the river and lowering his feet into the water, a monstrous fish rose up to devour him. His companion bade him not to fear, but to seize the fish and draw it out. Tobias did so. His comrade directed him to take out the heart, the gall and the liver, and put them away to be used for medicine. They then roasted as much of the fish as they could eat.

In passing through a certain city, Tobias found a near relative. He was told by his companion to stay so that he might ask his kinsman, Raguel, for the hand of his daughter, Sara. Tobias did as he was advised. During the marriage feast, the young man who joined Tobias went on to Rages to collect the debt.

Tobias remained with Raguel, his father-in-law, quite some time. But he felt worried about his parents, who might be growing uneasy at his long delay. He thought of returning home. On a certain morning, he and his wife asked the blessing of Raguel, and, in company with his former companion, he started out for his father's

house. Meanwhile the parents of Tobias became very anxious at the long delay of their son. His mother wept unceasingly, and every day went to the top of a neighboring hill from which she could see a great way off. At length, she saw him in a distance and recognized him at once. Then she ran back and told her husband that their son was coming. The old man, led by the hand (for he was blind), hastened to meet his son.

When they had thanked God for the safe return of their son, Tobias anointed his father's eyes with the gall of the fish which he had brought with him, and immediately the old man recovered his sight. Falling on their knees, they praised and thanked God. When the days of the feast were finished, the young man who had accompanied Tobias bade them rejoice and give thanks to God, to pray and to fast, and to fear not. "For," said he, "I am Raphael, one of the Angels that stand before God, and I have been sent by the Lord to heal you." Then he disappeared, and they continued to praise God and to publish all His wonders.

Which of you would not like to share the joys of Tobias? Good boys and good girls do so, when they listen to their Guardian Angel.

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

THE WORD OF GOD

"Blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it"
(Luke, xi. 28).

"Blessed are they who hear the word of God" says our divine Lord. Many children do not want to believe that the word of God will make them happy; and there are even some grown people who foolishly doubt this.

In your Bible History, you have read about the great prophet Elias. He was known to be very tall and strong. In his youth, he lived in a very wild part of a country, among very strong people. They built small stone houses for themselves on the mountainside, but most of the time they spent out-of-doors, taking care of sheep and ploughing the hard ground. Like them, he ran long races without getting tired. Like them, he took care of the sheep, and spent many nights on the mountains. Whilst his fellow-men were godless, he thought of God. When he was a boy, his mother and father told him stories about Abraham, Joseph, and Moses, and about others whom God loved and with whom He spoke. Those men had lived in Israel where Elias now lived.

Elias learned from travellers who came along the mountain trail that all over the country people had ceased praying to God; that they were praying to carved pieces of stone and wood, and that their king was foolish, and the queen was very wicked. Elias longed to do some-

thing to make them good again—to make them love God and pray to Him. He knew there was one thing he could do—the one thing we all can do whenever we are in trouble. He could pray. He prayed God to punish the people of Israel who were so wicked by not sending any rain or dew upon the country. If that happened, the people would have no water to drink, the ground would become hard, and no crops could grow. Elias hoped that, when the people were hungry and thirsty, they would be sorry for their sins and pray to God again.

Then God spoke to Elias, and told him to go to the king of Israel and tell him what the punishment meant. Elias was not afraid, for he knew that God would be with him. Fearlessly he crossed the high mountains which surrounded his home, and made his way to the palace of the king. He found the king upon his throne, dressed in gorgeous robes, whilst Elias wore a camel's skin. Then he gave the message: "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand," he said, "there shall not be any dew or rain these years but according to my word!"

After having delivered the word of God, he walked out of the palace. By the direction of the Lord, he found a little brook in a lonely place where no one lived, and on the soft grass beside it he lay down and went to sleep. The next morning when he awoke, Elias saw a flock of black ravens flying over his head; and, as they flew down and alighted beside him, he saw that they brought food, bread and meat. The ravens dropped the food on the green grass beside him, and then flew away. It was his breakfast which God sent him. In the evening the ravens returned again and brought his supper. God took care of Elias, as He had promised He would. Elias was very happy in that lonely spot, with soft grass to lie upon and kind birds to feed him. He knew that God,

who had taken care of him in the palace of the king and upon the lonely hillside, would never leave him.

This great prophet felt very happy because he heard the word of God and kept it. You are taught the word of God in school during the Christian Doctrine period; you hear it again in Sunday School, and every Sunday during the sermon. Many boys and girls dislike Christian Doctrine and Sunday School, and consider it a great penance to go to church to listen to a sermon. This is very sad. The children are like the Israelites mentioned in the story. If God should ever send you a sickness that would oblige you to stay at home, you would be glad to go to church to listen to a sermon or to instructions. Good old people who are sick and who cannot go to church, complain bitterly that they miss hearing the word of God from the pulpit on Sundays. At this stage of life, they find out what a comfort it is to hear sermons and instructions. Whilst our dear Lord was on earth, people flocked around Him. They came many miles, and deprived themselves of food for many days, in order to hear Him speak of heavenly things. Even little children clung to Him. They loved to be near Him, listening to stories of God the Father and the Angels. What Jesus told the children in those days, you can hear to-day in sermons, in Sunday School, and in religious instructions. Blessed are those who hear the word of God.

But, children, we must not only listen to the word of God, but must also fulfill it; in other words, we must be obedient. That is why our Lord said: "Blessed are those who hear the word of God, *and keep it.*" To obey is more important. Many people stood around to listen to our Lord, but, when they went away, they forgot what He had said. To them Jesus made this striking remark: "Not everyone that says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter

into the Kingdom of Heaven ; but he that doeth the will of My Father, who is in heaven." You all know the sad story of Judas. He had often heard Jesus preach. But he betrayed our Lord, and finally committed suicide. He sinned grievously, because he did not put into practice the good principles he was taught. You have learned in your Catechism that it is not enough to believe ; you must also obey the Commandments of God.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

DEEDS OF LOVE

"And everyone that loveth is born of God" (I John, iv. 7).

After the twelve Apostles had returned from their various missions, they came to Jesus and told Him all they had done. He then said to them: "Come, let us go to a place apart, where you may rest awhile." They went, therefore, into a boat and sailed to the other side of the Sea of Galilee in order that they might be alone. But, when the people heard of it, they followed them on foot, walking around the lake.

In the evening, the Apostles came to Jesus saying: "This is a desert place, and the day is now past: send the people away, that going into the next villages and towns they may buy themselves to eat." But Jesus said to them: "They have no need to go away; give you them to eat." The Apostles answered: "Let us go and buy bread for two hundred pence, and we will give them to eat." Jesus then said to them: "How many loaves have you? Go and see." And when they knew, they said: "Five and two fishes." The people were told to sit down in companies on the green grass, and Jesus taking the five loaves and the two fishes looked up to heaven and thanked God for His bounty. Then He broke the loaves into pieces, and gave them to the Apostles; the fishes He likewise divided among them, and the Apostles gave them

to the multitude. Jesus made those few loaves and fishes increase as they were given to the people, so that there was enough food for them all.

This story of our Lord feeding so many thousand people appeals to every one of us. How grand it is to be kind-hearted!

Some time ago I read of two little children, two good girls. They went out into the woods with a small wagon to gather firewood for their mother. After a time they had the wagon loaded down with dry sticks and small logs. They were very happy over the fact that they could surprise their mother by bringing home a big pile of wood. Homeward bound, they had to come down a steep hill, and they took great care not to lose a stick or a branch. They had hardly gone half way when two rough boys came out from behind a bush and upset their wagon. The poor girls began to cry, while the mean, cowardly boys laughed at their misfortune and ran away. Could you imagine anything more unkind or ruder than the conduct of those bad boys?

Here is a story from the Holy Book about a girl who had been very kind to a stranger. Abraham sent one of his servants to a city in distant Asia to find a wife for his son Isaac. The servant took ten camels, and Abraham had them laden with gold and silver and beautiful clothes to give to the maiden who would leave her home and come back to be his son's wife. The servant started on his long journey, and at last, having crossed the desert, he reached one evening the city where Abraham used to live. Outside of it was a well, and there the girls came every day to draw water. The servant meant to ask one of them to be his young master's wife. He did not look for beauty or for nice clothes, but he had a plan

of his own to find out who would make a good wife. He made his camels kneel down near the well. They were tired and thirsty, and so was he. The servant sat down, and watched the maidens come one by one to the well. They let their buckets down into it, drew up the water, and filled their pitchers. Then the servant prayed. His plan was that the maiden who offered him a drink and would give water to the camels should be the chosen one.

At length he saw a very sweet and lovely looking maiden, named Rebecca, coming out of the city and walking towards the well with a pitcher on her shoulder. The servant ran to meet her, and she gave him a drink. After she had finished supplying the water to the camels likewise, the servant gave her golden earrings and two gold bracelets. He asked if there were room in her father's house for him to spend the night. Again she showed how kind she was, for she answered: "We have both room and food enough for you and the camels." So the servant knew that God had helped him, and sent him to a maiden who was as good and kind as she was beautiful. After the parents and Rebecca had given their consent to the marriage, the servant started homeward with his master's future wife.

What a grand thing it is to be kind, to do a favor for someone else! Others are made happy, your Guardian Angel is happy, God is pleased, and you are happy. Our Lord Himself says: "It is a more blessed thing to give, rather than to receive." Jesus knows; and He was always doing good while He was on earth.

Every day, every hour, you can do good to others. If your friend has a problem or some school work which he does not understand, you can help him; if you do, you will make him happy. You have many toys, while some

other child has none. Could you not give him at least one of your toys to make him happy? Or again, if you ever see a poor girl ridiculed because she has no fine dress, could you not take her part and console her, and in this way make her happy?

PASSION SUNDAY

HOW TO BEAR A REPRIMAND

"And He was subject to them" (Luke, ii. 51).

In to-day's Gospel St. John tells us that "they took up stones to cast at Him"—that is, at Jesus. What a horrid deed the Jews were trying to do! They wanted to kill Jesus by casting stones at Him. The Jews always stoned to death their greatest criminals—that is, those who adored idols, those who blasphemed God, and those who worked on the Sabbath. What wrong had Jesus done? Why were the Jews angry? Jesus had told them the truth, and rebuked them for the bad lives they were leading. But they could not bear a public reprimand. The Scribes and high-priests always flattered the Jews, unceasingly reminding them that the Israelites were the Chosen People of God, the children of God. Flattery was the keynote in the Jewish synagogue.

In your daily actions, do not many of you follow the conduct of the Jews? Your parents, your teachers, your pastor, and your superior take the place of God; and very often they have to rebuke you for your bad conduct, your indifference, your slothful ways. They must punish you and correct you. Do you not look very angrily at them when they have to discipline you? Sometimes you are even tempted to raise your hand to strike back at them, and to curse and swear at them; and, furthermore, you go among your friends and talk about your parents and teachers.

Suppose Jesus were to come into your home just after you received a reprimand from your mother or your father? You would be looking very angry, and you might have your hand raised to strike. What would Jesus do? He would hide His face and go away from you. Now, children, your parents must correct your faults, otherwise they would commit sin. God orders parents to chastize their children when they do what is wrong. Every boy and girl should be grateful to his father and mother when they correct his or her faults. Every fruit-tree, in order that it may bear good fruit, must be pruned; that is, some branches must be cut off. If the weeds in a garden are allowed to grow, the garden will become a wilderness. All of you have faults which are growing in your heart like weeds in the garden, and your parents and your teachers, if they love you, will do their best to correct your faults by admonitions or punishments.

A story is told of a great general who, whilst travelling on a country road, passed the home of his teacher. He dismounted from his horse and went straight to the house. Finding the old schoolmaster at home, the general got down on his knees and said to him: "I have to thank you, master, for my success. I was a lazy, careless boy. You were strict with me, you corrected me, you chastized me. You did not let me rest till I mended my ways. I thank you for every harsh word, I thank you for every punishment, for I deserved all. It was you who shaped my future."

In your Bible History you read about Moses having murmured against God and how he was punished for it. God commanded Moses to go up on a mountain called Mount Nebo, and to look from there across the River Jordan into the land to which the Children of Israel were

going. "Thou shalt see the land before thee, but thou shalt not enter into it" (Deut., xxxii. 52). Then the Lord said that Moses should die on the mount when he had seen that land. And Moses went from the place where the Children of Israel had their camp to the mountain about which the Lord had spoken to him. And, when he came to the top of it, the Lord made him see very far over the land of Canaan, and told him that it was the land which he had promised Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, to give their descendants.

So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there on the top of the mount, before the people came into that good land. And the Angels buried him in a valley, but no man has ever known the place where he was laid.

PALM SUNDAY

OUR SORROWFUL MOTHER

"And thy own soul a sword shall pierce" (Luke, ii. 35).

To-day begins Holy Week, the saddest week in the year. Although the Jews sing the joyous anthem "Hosannah" and seem to be very happy with the disciples of Jesus in greeting the King of Jerusalem, still on this day our Lord wept and His holy Mother shared His tears.

Jesus left Bethany to go to Jerusalem. Two disciples brought a colt and Jesus sat on it. As He rode toward the city, a great multitude took off their outer garments and spread them in the way. Others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way in order that He might ride over them. They did this to honor Him, for so the people used to act when a king rode through their streets. And the multitude cried with a loud voice: "Blessed is He that comes to us, sent by the Lord." Yet, Jesus knew that, although they now praised Him, they did not love Him in their hearts, and that in a few days they would be crying out to crucify Him.

We all know, dear children, that Jesus was condemned to death by Pilate. There stood by the Cross of Jesus His Mother and the Apostle whom Jesus loved. And, because He was about to die and leave her, Jesus willed that this Apostle should take care of His Mother. Therefore, He told him that she was to be a mother to him

from that time forward, just as if she were his own mother. And He told His Mother to take the Apostle to herself as though he were her own son. From that hour the Apostle, whose name was John, took her to his own home to take care of her and give her all that she needed.

Children, you have seen the picture of the Sorrowful Mother. Perhaps, you have one at home in your parlor. Let us look at that picture for a little while. Indeed, it is a picture of sorrow. The Blessed Mother's face has the expression of death; tears are coursing down her cheeks; her eyes are sad and her looks downcast. Her heart is wounded by a many-edged sword. This great sorrow may be explained. On the Cross hangs her beloved son. Iron nails pierce His hands and feet, and she cannot remove them. Her Child suffers from an unquenchable thirst, and she has not a drop of water to give Him. Blood and perspiration cover His body, and she cannot relieve Him. The wicked Jews mock her Son, and she cannot stop them. Out of sheer malice, the wicked soldiers are casting lots over the garment her hands had woven for Him. The Sorrowful Mother feels the sufferings of her Child more than she feels her own sorrow.

Remember, children, many mothers of families must be like the Sorrowful Mother in her anguish. Ask yourself now: "Does my mother belong to that class?" Recollect how often you have wounded the heart of your good mother; like a pointed sword, you caused her pain by your bad conduct. Mother forbade you to do something. You did not like it. You became very angry; you cursed your mother, and slammed the door and ran away. Oh, what a crime to do such a deed to such a good parent! How her good heart must have bled!

On a certain day, your mother sent you to church to pray for your sick father. Several of your boy friends

coaxed you to a baseball game. You neglected going to church, and thereby disobeyed your mother. Some people told your mother afterwards that you missed Mass and played baseball. What a heavy blow that was to your mother! She saw that her son did not like to pray, and that, when she was dead, her child would not pray even for her.

The mother of such a boy or of such a girl is, indeed, a mother of sorrow. It was not an enemy who wounded her good heart; it was you, her own child, a child for whom she suffered, and deprived herself of so many things and is even now ready to do more. During this week, kneel down before a picture of the Sorrowful Mother, and pray for your mother. Think how often you have wounded her heart, and promise never more to make her sorrowful.

EASTER SUNDAY

DEATH CONQUERED

"This is the day which the Lord hath made: let us be glad and rejoice therein" (Ps. cxii. 24).

This is a happy day. Everywhere Christians forget their troubles and heartaches for the moment. They sing and rejoice on this the greatest feast of the Church. The bells in the church-towers ring, the organs peal forth joyous melodies, as we look upon the figure of the Risen Christ with His little banner, right above the altar. The priest sings "Alleluja," for Jesus is a conqueror over death.

What is the reason of all this rejoicing? Our Blessed Saviour tells us: "All ye Christians, rejoice. I have conquered death. You need no longer be afraid of death. Behold, I was nailed to the Cross and I died. I was taken down from the Cross. I was buried in a new tomb which was sealed, and a guard was placed over it. I was cold and stiff in death, My disciples and My Mother wept over Me, but the Father who is in heaven awakened Me, and I arose more glorious than ever. Christians need fear death no more."

Children, this is the message which Jesus brought to His people, and it consoled them. We, too, are delighted with this message. How everyone fears death! If you must ever witness a death-bed scene, you will notice how the cold sweat gathers on the forehead of the dying

person, how his heart begins to beat faster and faster. Just imagine for a moment you are about to leave this world. You must say "good bye" to your good father and your good mother. You will be placed in a narrow coffin and then lowered down into a grave, and at last covered up with soil. How terrible it is to die! But Jesus comes and tells you not to fear the grave. There is a place in heaven for your immortal soul, and on the Last Day your body will be raised up by God's power to join your soul again. You will meet your father and your mother, your brothers and your sisters, and all your friends; and you will be united with them forever.

All the friends of Jesus were very sad, after they had seen their beloved Master die on the Cross. They took His body, wrapped it up in linen cloths, and laid it in a new grave, hollowed out of solid rock. An immense stone was rolled before the tomb, which was sealed by order of Pilate, and soldiers stood over it to see that nobody removed the body. The soldiers remained there till the morning of the third day, when there was a noise and a shaking of the ground. A beautiful Angel came down from heaven, and rolled the huge stone away. His face was bright as the sun, and his garments were white as snow. The soldiers ran away.

Friends of Jesus very stealthily entered the garden by a rear gate, walking slowly and sorrowfully. They were bringing fresh linen and sweet spices. As they walked along, they were talking in a low voice. They were wondering how they could roll the great stone away from the tomb so as to reach the dead body of their Master. Suddenly they saw a bright light shining in front of the cave. The women hurried forward, and found that the great rock had been rolled away from the grave. Close by stood a beautiful Angel. The cave was empty, and

the women were frightened; they could not understand what had happened. But the Angel said: "Be not afraid, ye seek Jesus; He is not here; He is risen. Go and tell His disciples." Hurrying back, they told the disciples that the Lord was alive and had arisen as He foretold. Jesus soon after appeared to all His disciples, and talked with them. They all thus knew that He was really risen from the dead, and that He was again alive. They learned, too, what we must learn—that, as Jesus rose from the dead, so we and all whom we love shall rise also.

Jesus came back on that bright Easter morning to show us that death is not to be feared, if we try to lead good pure lives; for it means nothing more than a flight from earth to heaven to be united with Him and His Blessed Mother and all the Angels and Saints forever.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

THE BLESSING OF OBEDIENCE

"Hearken to thy father that begot thee; and despise not thy mother" (Prov., xxiii. 22).

If St. Thomas, in to-day's Gospel, had been more modest and believed the other Apostles, our Lord would have been more pleased; for He said to Thomas: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed."

Experience shows that there are many children who use offensive language about their parents, their teachers, and their pastor. Nothing suits them. Their parents wish them to come home at a certain hour, but they try and find some excuse to stay away longer. When they are given some tedious work to do or are told not to play with certain children, they answer their parents in an impertinent manner, and consider themselves wiser than those who have to care for and protect them.

In the Bible, we find the story of a boy who never questioned the actions of his father. He always said: "My father is right." His name was Isaac. One day God spoke to Abraham, and told him to take his only son Isaac, whom he loved so well, to the land of Moriah, and to sacrifice him there as a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains. How could Abraham kill his own dear son? Yet God told him to do it, and he knew that it was his duty to do whatever God, the sovereign Lord of the

entire world, said. He knew also that, even if Isaac were killed and burned on the altar, God could make him come to life again.

So Abraham arose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two young men, who were his servants, with him. Having reached his destination, the wood was made ready for the altar of sacrifice. Abraham started out with Isaac to go to the mountain as God had told him. The good boy was ready, and accompanied his father without a murmur. The journey was long. It took more than two days. It might have seemed somewhat long to young Isaac, but he was an obedient child and walked on. On the morning of the third day, they came to the foot of the mountain. Abraham gave orders to his servants to remain there, while he and his son went up the mountain. He took Isaac with him to the wood, while he himself carried in his hand fire and a knife or sword. Under the heavy load Isaac was very quiet as he slowly climbed the mountain, and they had gone half way when he broke silence. Isaac did not yet know what God had commanded his father to do. He knew they were going to offer up a burnt-offering, as he had the wood and his father had the fire. So he said to his father: "My father, where is the victim to be offered?" The father replied: "My son, God will provide." Then the boy thought: "My father is right." After they had reached the very top of the mountain, Abraham proceeded to build an altar of stone and laid the wood on it. He then bound Isaac, laid him on the wood, put out his hand, and drew the knife to sacrifice his son to God. The good boy neither cried nor shouted, but was silent. He would have suffered death at the hands of his father. But an Angel from heaven called to Abraham and said: "Do nothing to the boy, for now

God knows thou fearest Him, since thou wouldst sacrifice thy only son for His sake."

Children, if you should ever be tempted to follow your own notions and ideas, against the wishes of your parents and teachers, think of Isaac. Your superiors are much older than you are; they have more experience; they love you; God gives His special grace to them to direct you aright. When you do not understand why they tell you to do this or not to do that, do not criticize them. Be obedient. If things should go wrong, your obedience will bring you a blessing; God always rewards humility, and the Bible tells us that later Isaac grew up to be a blessed and happy man, because he never murmured and always obeyed.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

A SHEPHERD'S JOYS AND SORROWS

"I am the good shepherd" (John, x. 11).

In a country far away from here, there were many sheep and lambs and shepherds. In that country, the shepherds led their flocks to the fields, and the sheep followed them. Each sheep had its name, knew the shepherd's voice, and came when he called it. The shepherd stayed with his sheep by night as well as by day, to keep them from being lost and to shield them from wild beasts and robbers. When the sheep had eaten all the grass near the fold, the shepherd would take them further away, too far even to come back at night. So they would lie down on the ground under the stars, and the shepherd would lie down too. But he could not sleep; he had to keep awake to see that no harm came to the flock.

When a cowardly shepherd saw a wolf coming, he would run away, leaving the poor sheep and bleating lambs all alone in the dark. In such a great crisis, if the shepherd was good he would call to his sheep, and the sheep would hear his voice. With a bleat of joy, the flock would run to him, and crowd close behind him. The wolf might come nearer and nearer, but the shepherd would not move. He would never think of leaving his sheep, but would rather let the wolf kill him, if in that way he could save his flock. The wolf would stand still,

looking fiercely into the shepherd's face; but the shepherd's eyes would be so steady, he would look so strong and brave, that even the wolf would not dare to touch him. Then the good shepherd would lead his flock back to the fold, the sheep following close behind him, and the little lambs running about his feet, while he would carry the smallest one in his arms.

Jesus tells the Pharisees to-day that He also is a shepherd. His flock is very large. We belong to His flock; all peoples of the world—children, men and women, black and white, individuals of every race—belong to it. When Jesus looks over this flock, it pleases Him. The many thousands of Saints who are in heaven, and who lived once here upon earth, belong to the Good Shepherd. And at present, in every city and village, there are living Saints, people leading holy lives; and they especially belong to His fold. Our Lord is pleased with the children when they fold their hands nicely and say their prayers devoutly. The Good Shepherd feels happy and rejoices when out of your savings you give a little money to a poor boy or a poor girl, and when you offer your prayers for the poor souls in purgatory. Our Lord has cause for joy when, after having been one of the black sheep, you return to Him with your heart full with sorrow, promising that you will be more faithful, and that you will listen to His voice in the future.

The Good Shepherd also has His days of sorrow and anxiety. In to-day's Gospel, He told His hearers that He was a Good Shepherd—one who cared for his sheep. At all times, you are a great care and concern to Him. He knows when you are associating with bad companions; He sees you doing sinful acts in secret; He knows when you tell lies. Your parents may believe you to be a good boy or a good girl. The Good Shepherd knows if

you are a hypocrite. What great worry you cause our Lord! He is conscious of your dislike for prayers and your aversion for church.

The beautiful picture of the Good Shepherd was well known among the first Christians. We find prints of it in the famous Catacombs. Look for one of those pictures at home or in school, and stand before it recalling to mind the great anxiety and worry you have caused the Good Shepherd in past years.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

A JOY EVERLASTING

"The world passeth away, and the concupiscence thereof; but he that doth the will of God abideth forever" (John, ii. 17).

In the Gospel narrative of to-day Jesus bids "good-bye" to His disciples. All of them are very sad, because the good Master is going to leave them. Noticing how down-cast they were, Jesus consoles them, saying: "You shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice: and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." He promises them a joy that is everlasting.

A continuous pleasure and joy! How glorious! This would suit every boy and every girl. None of you likes pain. No good child wishes to be away from its father or mother. No one likes hard and continuous work.

It is really very sad that the pleasures we seek are of so short duration. They are as fleeting as the clouds overhead. For many weeks, we were looking forward to the Feast of Easter. It has come and gone, and with it its joy. Girls like pretty dresses. A girl gets a new dress; she wears it for a time, and gradually it wears out; all the pleasure is gone. You like good things to eat, but, as soon as your appetite is gone, the pleasure is gone with it. Many dislike work, many dislike study; they always wish for Sunday and vacation time to come. Sunday passes by, and so does the long summer vacation. All the pleasures we seek in this world, come to an end.

No matter how much money one has to spend, the thought that our pleasure shall be short-lived spoils it. Morgan, one of the richest men in the world, died some years ago. Whatever he wished for, he could have; nevertheless, his joys were cut short by death, and he was lowered down into a deep grave like any other mortal. Such are the pleasures of the world; they pass away.

After Jesus had died on the Cross, He returned in a glorified body. His disciples did not know Him at first. It was not until He talked to them, and called their names in the same dear voice, that they knew He was their Master. One evening, the disciples were gathered together on the seashore. Their money was all gone, and Peter said: "I am going fishing." The others said: "We will go with you." They all went into a boat and sailed off a little from the shore. All night they worked, but they did not catch anything. At early dawn, they noticed a stranger standing on the shore. He waved his hand, asking if they had caught anything, and they answered: "No." Then the stranger called: "Cast your net on the right side of the ship." So, over the right side they threw the net. Lower and lower it sank, and, when they tried to draw it in, it was so full of fish they could not lift it into the boat. At once they remembered that, during the three years they had lived with Jesus, they had been very fortunate; and one of the fishermen, John, whispered to Peter: "It is the Lord." Peter could not wait; he jumped overboard and swam to the shore, and threw himself at Jesus' feet.

The others followed slowly in the boat which was filled with fish. When they reached the beach, they saw a little fire burning there with some fried fish and bread lying near it. Beside the fire stood their Master. The disciples

were very shy before Him. His garments shone, and the look upon His face was heavenly. He told them to bring some fish they had just caught to add to those on the fire. Jesus invited them all to sit down and eat some breakfast. He took the bread and gave it to them, and the fish also. After they had eaten, they all sat around the Lord, and He talked to them. He told them what He wanted them to do after He had gone to heaven. He had loved them and taken care of them, feeding them when they were hungry, cheering them when they were sad. Now He wanted them to love other people, to feed them and take care of them.

People resemble little lambs and sheep very much. They get hungry and lonely and lost, just as little lambs and sheep. Jesus wanted His disciples to take care of these people, so He said: "Feed My lambs, feed My sheep." He also promised them a joy everlasting, which no one could take from them. That meant that they would be with God forever. Once you enter into heaven, you will never leave it. Children, you must endeavor to win this happiness. You will then rejoice for all eternity. Our Lord at one time said: "Lay not up treasures which the rust and moth consume and which thieves steal, but lay up treasures in heaven." In saying this, He wished to tell us to live holy lives, for this will bring happiness to us already in this world, and still greater joy with God the Father in heaven.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

PUNISHMENT NEVER FAILS

"Who will render to every man according to his works"
(Rom., ii. 6).

Jesus, my dear children, once more reminds His disciples of His departure. The words which our Lord uses are, indeed, very strange. They have, however, a great meaning. After the Last Supper, at His leave-taking, Jesus took those around Him into His confidence. As they sat at table, He talked with His Apostles, and told them not to be troubled because He was to be taken away from them. He announced to them that He was to be tortured by the Jews, and that He should die an ignominious death on the Cross. This made the Apostles very sad. Jesus added that He was going to heaven, to make ready a place for them there; and that He would come afterwards and take them there, so that they might be with Him. And He said to them: "Keep My commandments, for it is he who obeys My commandments that loves Me; and whoever loves Me, him My Father will love." Then He promised them that His Father would send the Holy Spirit into their hearts, to make them remember and understand everything He had told them, and that He would teach them also what they should teach others. "Do not grieve," He said, "after my death the Spirit of truth will come, and He will show the world that I was right. The Holy Spirit will not forget to punish the evildoers. Sin will be punished."

Children, you may think it is not true that punishment will follow. Many times you have told lies to your parents and teachers, and you escaped being punished. You have often pilfered and stolen; possibly you were neither caught nor punished. Many a dishonest man enjoys honors and riches. You will say: "Where is justice, where is the punishment?" Well, many hundred years ago, there were very wicked people in the world. They did so many bad things that God had to punish them. But among them there was one man who was so good that God spared him, and told him to build a big boat, which he called the ark. God told him that, when he had finished the ark, he should go into it with his family and the animals, and close the door. Then He would send a great heavy rain, a flood, and all the wicked people should be drowned.

Gentle summer rain fell at first; then it fell more heavily, until soon so much water had fallen that the ground was covered, and the ark began to float. The rain fell in torrents, the little brooks and lakes overflowed, and the flood had come. The winds blew, and the ark tossed like a ship at sea. It rained without stopping for forty days and forty nights. The Bible says the flood-gates of heaven were opened, meaning that the rain came down—not only in little drops, as we see it come—but as if it poured out of great flood-gates in the sky. And the springs, the creeks, the rivers, and the great ocean, began to overflow the land. What, now, were those men to do who would not obey God, nor listen to Noah? Before the rain came, they thought there would be no flood. Now the flood had come, and they saw that all he had told them was true. How glad they would have been to go with him into the ark, but it was too late! No doubt, they climbed up to the highest places on the hills and

mountains; but the hills and mountains were covered at last; there was no other place for them to go, and all the people were drowned.

Do not rejoice too soon that you are going to escape. You are not yet punished for lying or for stealing. The chastisement may be delayed for many years. You may die and be buried with your evil deeds, but you have fallen into God's hands. Perhaps, you have been already punished, and you do not know it. God has withdrawn His grace from you, and has given you over to the bad desires of your heart. The punishment God inflicts is not always seen. Many a man may go about seemingly joyous and happy; yet, in his heart there is a worm that never dieth.

Several years ago, a well-dressed gentleman stood before a judge and requested that he might get a life sentence. "Many years ago," he said, "I committed an awful crime by which I became very rich. I went to South America where I have a beautiful home, much money, a good wife and children. With all this luxury around me, I had no peace, I had no rest. I did much good, but my conscience continuously upbraided me. I came back to this country to atone for my crime, as otherwise I shall have no rest." The avenging hand of God pursued this man in secret, though no one else knew it.

My dear children, you should from time to time do some voluntary penance or practise some self-denial to atone for sins you have committed. This is the only way to show God that you are really sorry for having offended Him, who is so good and loving, and by doing this you will escape the wrath of God.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

OUR GREAT ADVOCATE

"We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just"
(I John, ii. 1).

A story is told, my dear children, about a strange incident that happened near Buckingham Palace, the residence of the British sovereigns. One morning one of the dukes was standing at his window fronting a large square. He was looking out at the people and omnibuses moving to and fro in the street. Amid this great throng, a woman stood out very conspicuously. She was dressed like a peasant, and seemed to have come from a distance. Her little child looked bewildered at seeing so many men and women. The woman continuously gazed at the palace, and her eyes seemed to wander from window to window. The pedestrians laughed at her questions. The duke was very anxious to know her business. He went down to meet her, and, as he came out of the palace, the woman took courage to approach him. The good woman wanted some one to introduce her to the king, that she might request the release of her husband from prison. She was a poor woman, and she and the child were starving. The duke bade her follow him into the palace, and promised to present her case to the king. The woman and child were ushered into a most beautiful room. After a short time, the king came and heard the story about the imprisoned husband, and assured the wife that her hus-

band would soon be released. Full of gratitude the woman fell on her knees to thank the king, but he said: "Give thanks to the duke, not to me; he brought you into my presence, and he interceded for you."

We are all just like that woman. We know that we have often offended God. Our guilt makes us often hesitate to ask our Father directly for pardon. We are always looking about for some one to intercede for us. We have a powerful intercessor in the person of Jesus Christ, the only Son of God. In to-day's Gospel, He tells His Apostles: "If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you." That means that, if we ask God the Father anything in the name of Jesus or when Jesus intercedes for us, our prayer will be heard. Jesus has done so much for the glory of His Father whilst He was on earth, that His word is all-powerful with God the Father.

But He does not intercede for everyone who is bad or careless. If our prayer is to be of any avail, we must pray well, and live good lives. There are many children who never pray to our Father devoutly, not even once in the year. There are others who go to church because they must do so, but they misbehave themselves during service, insult God, and disturb older people. Will Jesus then be your intercessor when you call on Him in trouble? You will look for His help in vain, if you are not sincere and desirous of pleasing Him. And, if you do not pray every day to Him, He will know you do not love Him. Many Catholic children conduct themselves like heathens; they swear and they lie; they steal and they commit other sins, knowing well that they are doing wrong. Will Jesus care for a child that is always committing sin? A child who forgets God when he is happy and blessed with success, need not expect God to help him when later he

is in need or in trouble. Jesus will say: "I know you not."

Hundreds of years ago in one of the monastic schools dwelt a little boy named Albert. Like many of the boys of to-day, he found it hard to study, and so he tried the same remedy that some boys try to-day—he decided to run away from school. He was ashamed to tell his teachers that he had become discouraged, and had made up his mind that he would not try any longer to get an education. So one night he left his bed in the dormitory, and, going out into the yard, he placed a ladder against the wall which surrounded the convent school. Just as he was ready to mount, he saw three beautiful ladies standing at the top, one of whom questioned him as to his intentions.

Quite frankly he said that he found it hard to study, and had decided that he would not try any longer.

"Why did you not come to me for help?" questioned the beautiful lady.

"And who art thou, dear lady?" replied Albert.

"I am the Mother of Wisdom, and I am ever ready to help those who invoke me. You had made up your mind to become a priest and serve my Divine Son, and so I have come to help you. Go back now, and try again in my name."

Albert bowed, and, looking up again, saw nothing but the silver moonlight streaming over the deserted yard. Quietly he put away his ladder and returned to his dormitory.

The next morning his classmates were astonished at his answers, and wondered how he managed to learn his lesson so quickly. Their wonder grew with each passing day, and soon Albert was the leader of his class. He continued to work hard and pray, and he became a

famous scholar in the Order of St. Dominic. His name has come down through the centuries as Blessed Albert the Great. He is now a Saint in heaven, but he was once just a little boy trying to do right like many of you, children, to-day, though he did not succeed until he adopted the right means. The same source of help is waiting for you to-day, and, if the way through school be sometimes dark, you have only to seek help from your Mother Mary, the Seat of Wisdom, and all will be well.

SUNDAY AFTER THE ASCENSION

OUR DEPARTED PARENTS

"He that feareth the Lord, honoreth his parents" (Eccl., iii. 8).

The Feast of the Ascension, my dear children, is passed. On a mountain top, Jesus told His disciples to love all, to be kind to everybody, and to go throughout the entire world telling people about Him and His love for mankind. Now Jesus had left His disciples. They were all very sad, and their thoughts were continually turning to Him. At times they would look heavenwards, as if Jesus were about to come back. They did not forget Him, although they knew He had left them forever here below. They knew that they would never see Him again by the shore of the lake, or in the Garden, or on the mountain. They could not forget their good Master.

Children, some time ago a wealthy lady called on her pastor with a sum of money and said: "Father, I leave this money with you. When I am dead, I want prayers and Masses said for my poor soul, so that I may be brought quickly from purgatory into Heaven." The priest, rather astonished, looked at the woman and remarked: "My dear lady, you have several children, and I am sure that they will not forget their mother when she is gone." The good old woman burst into tears, and amidst her sobs expressed her grief in these words: "Oh, Father, it is sad to say, but the first and foremost

thought of my children is how much they will inherit; they will have no consideration for my soul after my death."

What unnatural children, you will say. Yes, but there are many like them in the world, who forget their parents very soon after death has taken them. Among you, my dear children, there are some who have lost their good father or mother by death; some of you are orphans. But, even if you still have your parents, a day will come, perhaps very soon, when God will call either your dear father or your loving mother away. Will you also forget them when they are gone? Will you be guilty of such neglect? I cannot believe that there is one child here who would be so heartless. No, no, as long as you live, never forget your dear parents, who have done you so much good, who have toiled and suffered for you in a way that you will understand only later in life. Learn from the example of Joseph of Egypt.

Jacob, the father of Joseph, when he was about to die, called for Joseph, and asked him to bring his children to him. Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph, and Joseph also. And he called all his other sons, and blessed each one of them, and told them that he was about to die. And, after Jacob had finished speaking, he passed away. Then Joseph, putting his face down to his father's, wept over him and kissed him; he then commanded his servants to embalm his father's body, so as to keep it from decaying. The Egyptians mourned for Jacob seventy days; and Joseph sent word to the ruler, Pharaoh, that he had made a promise to his father not to bury him in Egypt, but in his own sepulcher in the land of Canaan. He asked permission, therefore, to bury him there. Pharaoh told him to do as he had promised; and Joseph went up to Canaan to lay his father to rest,

and with him went Pharaoh's servants and many great men from the land of Egypt with their chariots and horses, together with a great multitude of the people.

What a noble son was Joseph of Egypt! The memory of his loving deed has been preserved in history. Joseph, who was so wealthy and noble, honored his old father, who was so simple and poor. Although you may not be rich like Joseph, yet you can imitate him and not forget your departed parents, but think of them lovingly. Every day you should pray specially for your father and mother, if God has called them away; remember them at the Masses that you hear. You must not only pray for them; you must still remain obedient to their advice. Put into practice the principles they tried to develop in you while they were living. They have often said to you: "Child, be pure, do not steal, obey your superiors, work well, and do not disgrace us." Now is the time you may show your appreciation of the good advice and the good counsel they gave you.

A boy once said: "There is no one like mother to me." This boy loved his mother very much. When she died, he felt he could not be consoled. The good boy took his mother's picture, and put it in a costly frame. Every day he would put a bouquet of flowers before the picture, and stop a moment to look at it. He hung it on the wall over his bed. The first thought in the morning, the last thought at night, was of his good mother. But, alas! as he grew older, he gradually forgot his dear mother and all her good counsels. He decorated the walls of his bedroom with many other pictures, and he looked at them oftener than at the picture of his mother. After a great frolic one evening with his companions, he came home rather late and then retired. He had a peculiar dream. He noticed his mother coming into the room.

She was clad in a white gown, with a crown on her head. But she appeared to be very sad and downcast. The son was frightened and said: "Mother dear, you are wearing such a pretty dress and such a bright crown. Why are you so sad? Are you in pain?" The good mother pointed to her picture on the wall: "My child has forgotten me," she said, "and that is why I find no rest." Immediately the mother disappeared. The son awoke suddenly, and, recalling what he had just heard, he at once removed the other pictures. Every day after that, he thought of his mother, prayed for her and led a good life, and she never had to return to warn him again. Dear children, surely you at least will not forget your parents when they are dead.

PENTECOST

HEED JESUS'S WORD

"I must work the works of Him that sent Me, whilst it is day" (John, ix. 4).

When the day for the Feast of Harvest, or Pentecost, had come, my dear children, the disciples were all met together in one place. Suddenly they heard a sound, like the rushing of a great wind from heaven, which filled the house where they were sitting. And there appeared in the room what seemed to be flames of fire, in the shape of tongues, and one of these flames rested on the head of each of the disciples. Then the Holy Spirit came into them, as Jesus had promised, and they all began to speak other languages, such as they had never understood before. The Holy Spirit made them able to do this, so that they might go to far-off countries and preach the Gospel there.

Now there were at that time in Jerusalem Jews who had come from the countries where those languages were spoken; and, when they heard the disciples, they were astonished and asked: "Do not all these men live in Galilee? How, then, are they able to speak the languages of those countries where we were born?"

The Holy Ghost filled the Apostles with great courage. Without the least fear Peter came out of the house and preached to the Jews and the Gentiles. He openly declared that Jesus was the Son of God, and reminded

the Jews of the great crime they had committed when they crucified Him. At first the Jews sneered at Peter and laughed him to scorn. But gradually some of them became more serious when they realized what they had done. They were filled with remorse. Many a one with bowed head struck his breast, saying: "How foolish I have been and how wicked! Had I only heeded Jesus's word! Had I only followed Him! Had I only received Him into my home! Oh, had I not mocked Him! Had I not cried out: Crucify Him!" For the rest of their lives they reproached themselves, although they had been baptized and had become Christians.

Children, many a boy and many a girl as they grow older often repeat to themselves: "Had I only heeded the advice of my father or my mother!" Charles had a good devoted father who loved his children. By day he would work, and at night he would take care of them. But Charles despised and worried his father. Ugly, ungrateful words came from his lips. The father died, and Charles had to go among strangers. Then his eyes were opened, and he learned how good his father had been to him, and the great evil he had done in being so ungrateful. The boy was filled with remorse. How he desired now to have his father with him again! But it was too late.

Mary was a very proud and haughty girl. No dress would suit her; she wanted to please others. She did not heed the words of her mother, but laughed at her good counsels. One day her vanity was the cause of a great sin. "Shame, shame, shame!" she had heard from everybody. "Had I only given heed to mother's words!" she cried. But it was too late.

Those who are rejected by God and who are now in hell, moan and cry unceasingly: "Had I only heeded

Jesus's words!" Remorse, like a worm, gnaws continuously at their hearts, and burns them steadily like a fire.

Children, you still have your father and mother with you. Thank God for that favor. Never say a harsh word to them or cause them to worry. Many unhappy hours will be crowded into your lives if you act otherwise. Your parents, your teachers, and your pastor will tell you what to do to be good. Listen to their advice, and thank God that you have someone to lead you. The time will come when you will stand alone in the world. How happy you would be then, if you could hear some kind word from their lips! On the other hand, how blessed you will feel, if you have obeyed them when you could!

Every one has habits, dear children, and oftentimes they are bad. Thus, some of you tell lies frequently, and others steal dainties from the pantry. Overcome yourselves and fight those sins. Some day it may be too late; you will have to say: "Why did I not heed those kind words of my superiors?" God has blessed you with health and youth. Make a resolution every morning to do some kind deed that day. Try and please God by doing some charitable act every day. Some night you may go to bed, and not awaken the following morning. If you have no good deeds to your credit, you will regret it very much, but it will then be too late. The Lord on one occasion said: "You must do good whilst it is day: the night cometh when no man can work."

TRINITY SUNDAY

I AM A CHRISTIAN

"You were heretofore darkness, but now light in the Lord"
(Ephes., v. 8).

Dear children, you have frequently heard people say: "How often we forget what we have learned in school!" You may forget your arithmetic, your grammar, your geography and history, and so forth, but there is one thing you must never forget as long as you live, and that is, that you are a Christian. Whether you are rich or poor, happy or unhappy, honored or dishonored, you must be a Christian. To-day the Church celebrates the Feast of the Holy Trinity, and by this feast we are reminded of our obligation as Christians.

When you were born, you were a little heathen, at enmity with God. Your parents took you to church as soon as possible, and asked the priest to baptize you. Right then and there, as the priest poured the water over your head, while saying the words: "I baptize thee, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," something most wonderful happened—God made you clean and holy. In an instant you became His own child and heir to the kingdom of heaven. That was a great privilege. The poorest Christian child is greater in the eyes of God than a wealthy king who is not a Christian. St. Agatha, whilst standing before the pagan judge, said to him: "It is better to be a poor Christian

than a rich, haughty heathen." Children, do not forget that God set you apart from the rest of the world by making you Christians.

When Moses had grown up to be a man, he knew that he was not the son of Pharaoh's daughter, but was one of the children of Israel. Although he might have been rich and great had he stayed with her, he chose rather to go and live with his own people. And Moses went out one day to the place where the Israelites worked for the Egyptians. There he saw a cruel Egyptian striking a Hebrew. Then Moses looked this way and that; and, when he saw no one near, he killed the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand; for Moses believed that God had sent him to set the children of Israel free, and he believed they would understand this.

Moses fled out of Egypt and prepared the way to deliver his people from the yoke of Pharaoh. And the Lord commanded Moses to lead the Israelites through the Red Sea. Then Moses lifted up his rod and stretched out his hand over the sea. Suddenly the waters separated and were piled up on each side of them like a wall, and the children of Israel walked on the bottom of the sea on dry ground till they all came safe to the other side.

Mark well, children, even among the heathens Moses knew that he was an Israelite, a child of the true living God. If Moses as an Israelite never forgot what he was, much more should you never forget that you are Christians.

When you are told to stay at home and help mother with some housework, you are sometimes tempted to disobey and to go out and run about with some other children of the neighborhood. You do your work with an ill will, and you keep teasing your mother to let you go and

play with the others. You get angry and you use bad language. That is very bad. You must remember that you are a Christian, a follower of Jesus, who as a little boy was always obedient to His parents.

As you grow older, you are thrown among strangers. You have to live with people who do not pray, and never go to church. They become lukewarm, and forget that they were Christians. That will be your chance to show that you, at least, are a good Christian, and that you are not afraid to pray nor ashamed to go to church. Your good example will edify those who are lukewarm, and perhaps will lead them back to Jesus, who will be very pleased with you.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PRAISE AND BLESS GOD'S GREATEST GIFT

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain"
(Exod., xx. 7).

This week the Church, dear children, began to celebrate the Feast of the Blessed Sacrament. It is called the Feast of Corpus Christi. You see the altar is decorated with flowers, and the entire church has put on a festive appearance. There are rows of lights shining like so many stars. With the greatest reverence the faithful kneel before the Blessed Sacrament and say their prayers. "Praise ye the Lord from the heavens, praise ye Him, all His angels; praise ye Him, O sun and moon; all ye stars and light." Such is the hymn in which all join.

The Feast of Corpus Christi commemorates the institution of the Blessed Sacrament by our Lord on Holy Thursday. The Jewish Feast of the Pasch or Passover was then at hand. Jesus and the Apostles were going to keep this feast together, and the Apostles asked Him where they should make it ready. He told them to go to Jerusalem, and that there they should meet a man carrying a pitcher of water; they were then to follow him into the house, and say to the man who lived there that the Master wanted a chamber to celebrate the Feast of the Pasch with His disciples. The disciples did as Jesus commanded, and the man showed them the room, and they made the feast ready there.

Since the Feast of the Passover was celebrated at night, Jesus started out with His twelve Apostles in the evening to reach the house. Reclining at table, Jesus spoke to the Apostles, saying: "I have greatly desired to eat this Pasch with you before I die, for, I say unto you, I will not eat any more of the lamb that has been sacrificed, until I Myself have been sacrificed for the sins of the people."

He then poured water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of His disciples, wiping them with a towel with which He was girded. After He had washed their feet, He sat down at the table with the Apostles, and, as they were eating together, took bread and blessed it, and broke it in pieces and gave it to His Apostles, saying: "Take and eat all of this, for this is My Body which is broken for you." He meant that the substance of the bread was changed into the substance of His Body. Then He took some wine in a cup, and, when He had thanked God, He gave it to His Apostles, and they all drank of it. Later He said: "This is My Blood, which is shed for the remission of sins." He meant that the substance of the wine was changed into the substance of His Blood, because His Blood was very soon to be shed, like the blood of the victims at the Jewish altars, so that all who believed in Him might have their sins forgiven. And He gave the power to His Apostles and all their successors in the holy priesthood to do the same as He had done, by the wonderful words: "Do this in commemoration of Me."

Oh, who could express the great joy of our Lord when He sees so many children gathered around His tabernacle praying and singing the praise of this great mystery and of His Holy Name? But do you always pronounce the Holy Name with the greatest reverence?

Unfortunately, not all of you do so. Sometimes you are told at home to help your good mother, and you do not like it; perhaps you turn about and use bad language. You may even use the Holy Name of Jesus disrespectfully. Oh, what a crime! And then at recess, during class period, two boys will begin to fight and then curse and swear, and thereby offend God and shock their Guardian Angels. You may remember how on your First Holy Communion Day the priest put the Sacred Host on your tongue. What a grand day that was! But how sad it is when any of you abuse that sanctified tongue by blasphemy!

You have often told our dear Lord that you love Him more than your father or your mother. Jesus believed you. But what kind of love had you really got when you used His Holy Name in vain? Some day, when you are very ill and perhaps on your deathbed, you will long to show a great love for Jesus, and call with confidence on His Holy Name. That Holy Name would help you and guide you to heaven. But, if you have deliberately abused that Holy Name, what may you then expect?

Children, during this season of Corpus Christi let us honor and praise our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and ask Him to forgive us for the sins we have committed by our tongue. We will promise to be on our guard against cursing and swearing. When the great St. Polycarp was taken prisoner and the pagans demanded under pain of death that he should profane the Holy Name of Jesus, he answered: "I have served Christ for eighty-six years, and He did me no harm. How can I curse and blaspheme my Lord and King, who has done me so much good?" We must imitate him, and ever pronounce the sweet name of Jesus with devotion and love.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE OUTCAST

"This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (Luke, xv. 2).

The Pharisees, my dear children, were always very much puzzled by Jesus when He associated with sinners. He made outcasts His companions. He ate with thieves and prevaricators. He sat down and talked with malefactors. The Pharisees considered that a holy man could not do anything like that. In their opinion holy persons were never to have dealings with wicked people. They were to avoid them and steer clear of them. The Pharisees wanted our Lord to scold the sinners and to expose their faults. But Jesus said that He had come to save the sinner and not the just, and that is why He loved to talk with those outcasts of society.

Some time ago in a very large city a great auction took place. Tables and chairs, book-cases and beds, clocks and many other articles were put up for sale. All these things were bought by the people. After every piece had been disposed of, the auctioneer found an old picture covered with dust and cobwebs. At first nobody wanted to buy it, but finally a young man got it for fifty cents. He took it home and cleaned it. To his great surprise he found that it was a painting of the divine Child Jesus, the work of a great master. It was sold later for ten thousand dollars.

This story may give you an idea of what our Lord did.

Whenever He met a man who was despised by others as a scoundrel, He always supposed the wretched man was good at heart. A kind word joined to mildness often won him over. And Jesus succeeded wonderfully. We know that the penitent thief on the cross showed great sorrow; with love and patience the Lord cleansed his soul from sin, and changed it into the likeness of God. The proud Pharisees never converted sinners; it was only the great love of Jesus that made saints.

Once upon a time there was in Jericho a man named Zaccheus, who was chief among the publicans or tax-gatherers. He was rich. As Jesus passed through the streets of the city, Zaccheus tried to see who it was, but could not on account of the crowd, because he was not so tall as the rest of the people. Then he ran on before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree, for Jesus was to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him: "Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for to-day I must stay at thy house." And he made haste and came down, and going with Jesus received Him into his house joyfully. Now the publicans, who took the people's money for the Romans, were often unjust and cruel men. They were unjust to poor persons, taking from them more than was right. It is very likely that Zaccheus did this before Jesus came to his house. But, when Jesus had come, he believed that God had sent Him; he listened to His teaching, and obeyed His words. And Zaccheus stood up before all the people who were there, and told Jesus that he would no longer be unjust. He would be kind to the poor, he said, and would give them half of all the money he had. And, if he found he had taken anything that did not belong to him, he would give back four times as much to the person from whom he had taken it.

When Jesus saw how Zaccheus had repented of his sins and that he was obedient to what He taught him, He told Zaccheus that all his sins were forgiven. But the Jews found fault with Jesus for going to the house of a publican; they said that He had gone to stay with a man who was a sinner. Then Jesus told them that He had come into the world on purpose to go among sinners, so that He might teach them to repent, and save them from being punished for their sins.

In your school there are very likely some boys or girls with whom no one wants to have anything to do. They are very rough; they had been caught stealing and lying; in short, they have a bad name. Nobody wants to play with them. That is just the way the Pharisees acted. Try to imitate our Lord and say to yourself: "I don't think that these children are so bad; perhaps they are just a little hurt." Have one or the other join your games, or bring them to your house and show them your toys, and perhaps give them a present. By doing this, you will follow in the footsteps of Jesus and perhaps save a soul. The good Angels in heaven will rejoice, and look down upon you as a little apostle.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

LABOR AND WORK

"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (Gen., iii. 19).

All night long Peter and his fellow-fishermen had been out on the lake trying to catch fish. They lowered their nets at different points, but without any success. In their disappointment they rowed homeward and brought their ships to the shore. Jesus had gone down just at this time to Capharnaum, by the Lake or Sea of Genesareth, and many people had come to hear Him. As He stood by the sea, He saw the two ships by the shore, the fishermen now washing their nets. Having entered one of the boats, which was Peter's, Jesus asked Him to push it out a little from the land. When Peter had done this, Jesus sitting there began to teach the multitude.

When He had finished this discourse, He told Peter and Andrew, his brother, to sail on the sea, and let down their nets. Peter answered: "Master, we have been laboring all night, and have caught nothing; yet at Thy command, I will let down the net." When they had done this, they caught so great a multitude of fishes that their net broke. Beckoning to their partners, who were in the other boat by the shore, and calling the other fishermen to come to their aid, they filled both boats with the fish, until they were almost sinking. When Peter saw the miracle which Jesus had done, he fell down at Jesus's knees and worshipped Him, saying: "Depart from me,

for I am a sinful man, O Lord." He was astonished and so were his partners, James and John. Jesus worked this miracle so that these men might see it, and believe in Him and know that He was the Son of God. He now chose these poor fishermen to be His special disciples to go with Him wherever He should go, saying to them: "Come with Me." They left their boats and all they had, and followed Him. When Jesus had said to Peter: "Sail out now on the sea and let down your net to catch fish," he and his companions had stepped into their boats at once, and rowed out into the deep. Children, that is what we call obedience and industry. And our Lord was well pleased when they obeyed, and caught such a quantity of fishes.

What a great example Peter and his companions give to everybody, young and old! Work and study are hard taskmasters. Children are always ready to play and romp about. But young folks must overcome their lazy feelings and go to school from day to day, and do their homework, and help their mothers to do housework or assist their fathers to chop wood, etc. If you are lazy and get cross, as some of you often do, it will be necessary for your parents to chastize you. What is the little work you have to do compared to the work your father does every day? For eight or ten hours he is in the shop or at his desk in the office. And your mother—she never gets rest day and night; she is always ready to serve you. Many of your mothers must make your clothes for you, and often ply their needles far in the night. Do you want to shirk your little work when you think of that?

Our Lord does not love lazy boys or lazy girls. He loves diligent children. When He who is God lived on earth as a boy and a man, He never rested. He was continually going from village to village doing good—

instructing the ignorant, restoring health to the sick, consoling the sorrowful. When He was quite worn out by His day's work, He would sit beneath a tree to rest. The people used to bring their little children to Jesus so that He might put His hands on them and bless them. His disciples, however, found fault with those who brought them, lest they should disturb Jesus, and they wished to send them away. But Jesus was much displeased with His disciples, and said: "Let the little children come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." He meant that only those persons who are humble and loving like little children, shall come into His kingdom. He took them on His lap, and prayed with them and blessed them. Jesus wants every child of God to work cheerfully and willingly. Every task, no matter whether it is schoolwork or housework, brings a blessing from Jesus to the good child.

Every industrious boy or girl is also good, kind, obedient, and agreeable. You have often heard the story of the rich man who, when he came to die, called his sons to his death-bed and told them about a great treasure that was hidden in the vineyard. In the springtime after their father's death the boys began to dig. Day and night they worked looking for the great treasure; no treasure could be found, but their father had not deceived them. He knew what a fine crop could be got out of the ground if it was well dug up and tilled. And so the following autumn the vines were covered with the finest grapes, and the boys' diligence was rewarded as their father foresaw.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

CONSEQUENCES OF ANGER

"But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matt., v. 22).

In to-day's Gospel, my dear children, Jesus uses very strong words. Let us, however, examine His words carefully. We find our Lord sitting on a hill surrounded by His Apostles and a multitude of the people. He told them that the Fifth Commandment forbade killing. If anyone kills a man, the murderer is brought before the judge and condemned to death. "I am going to tell you something that is even stricter," said Jesus. "If any one entertains anger even in his heart he is in danger of being judged and condemned. And whosoever shall say to his brother an abusive word, shall be in danger of being brought before the Judge, and there be condemned to a painful death. And whosoever shall say 'Thou fool,' shall be in danger of hell-fire." You will surely agree with all those who listened to Jesus that this is very severe language.

Just notice how our Lord, who is always so good and so kind, was in this instance so very strict. If you are abusive in your language to your companions whilst you are angry, you are in danger of hell-fire. Are you not frightened when you think of your conduct? How often have you not been angry, very angry, with a boy or a girl, or with your relatives? Have you not even forgot

yourselves so far as to be angry with your parents when they corrected you? Would not Jesus say that you too deserved a severe punishment?

Again, how often have you tantalized other children! You mocked them, you laughed at them, and made them very angry. During your play, if things did not go your way, have you not at times started a fight without the least provocation, and called your companions bad names? If you recalled that Jesus was standing by listening to such language, you would hide yourself for shame. At another time you have offended others by being impertinent, even to grown-up people, when they did not do what you wanted. Your parents and your teachers could tell how bold you were when things did not come your way. Unfortunate cripples and old people have been held up to scorn by the nicknames you gave them. Do you forget that Jesus said that, whatever you do to the sick, to the poor and to the weak, you do unto Him? If you have been guilty of bad conduct, how do you dare to pray to Jesus, if you do not first tell Him you are really sorry? Sometimes you are guilty of even greater mischief by striking others in your anger, or by destroying whatever comes in your way. What would our Lord say about such conduct? He would turn away with tearful eyes if He found a child so cruel and heartless, and in eternity He would completely ignore him and leave him to his melancholy fate.

An old philosopher had a little daughter who was only ten years old. One day, while she was playing in front of the house with some peasant children, a quarrel arose. One of the boys struck the little girl on the arm with a stick, making it black and blue. She ran into the house crying, and said to her father: "That naughty boy has bruised my arm. I want you to go out and whip him."

The father took the little girl on his knee and said: "My daughter, tell me, what good would it do if I went out and beat him? Would not your arm really hurt as much? He struck you because he was angry with you. For a few minutes he hated you. If I whip him, he will hate you more than ever and hate me too, and all of us. Would it not be better to make him love you? Perhaps that would change his character for the rest of his life. I tell you what I would do if I were you; I would go to the pantry and get some of that nice raspberry jam and take it out to him, and I think it will make him love us all, instead of hating us." The little girl did what her father told her, and she felt happy ever after.

The severe words from the mouth of the good Jesus are meant for you—you, bad boy, and you, bad girl. Our Saviour wants to find you full of love and full of friendship for all your companions and everybody else. If you want to be a child of God and have God forgive you, you must imitate Jesus. Do you want to be separated from God for all eternity? Never! In that case you must try and be agreeable to other people, pleasant, obliging, and full of love.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

WORTHY OR UNWORTHY

"When you shall have done all these things that are commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants" (Luke, xvii. 10).

When the people heard of Jesus being near, they followed Him around the Sea of Galilee. They came out of cities and towns and hamlets—men, women, and children. They left their homes and their work. They gave up everything just to be near Jesus. Three days and three nights they lived in the hot and barren desert, filled with a great desire to hear Jesus teaching. They showed such a great love for the Son of God that the Saviour rewarded them by a miracle. As they were hungry, He commanded His Apostles to make all the people sit down. The wonderful miracle that Jesus did was that He multiplied the loaves and the fishes as they were distributed among the people. These people made themselves worthy of this great favor by their good conduct and zeal.

Whenever Jesus talked, the great crowds listened with the greatest attention. All kinds of people were in the crowds—rich and poor, soldiers with swords by their sides, and even the Jewish priests with their long white gowns. One day there were many persons standing about Jesus, listening to the wonderful words He spoke, when, on the outer line of the crowd, some women and children gathered. They had come out of the white

houses which dotted the green hillsides. Some of the women carried babies; others held little ones by the hand. They were poor women and the children had little clothing. They pressed through the crowd until they reached Jesus. Then the mothers asked Him to bless them, to put His hands upon their heads and pray for them. He not only let them come to Him, but He took the babies up in His arms, and laid His hands on the heads of the little boys and girls, or put His arm around them, and blessed them all.

How worthy those children must have been to get this great privilege! But do you know that you can be just as near to Him to-day as those children were? Every day in our prayers we can talk to Him, and He will hear us. He is with us every minute, loving us and taking care of us, no matter whether we are still very young or grown up. All day long—all night long, too—He is waiting in the Tabernacle to have us come and talk to Him, and ask Him to bless us and mother and father. Do you ever go in by yourselves to speak to Him in the altar?

"Am I worthy?" is a question you ought to put to yourselves. Children, you have your hearts constantly filled with desires, your lips always ready to ask for something. If a boy sees one of his companions wear a new straw hat, at once he runs to his mother and wants one like it. Around Christmas time, he goes into a toy-shop, and he bothers his parents continuously till they buy him what he wants. During your youth not a day passes without a demand for something. There is no harm in expressing a wish, provided you go about it in a gentle and becoming way. Before you present your petition always ask yourself: "Am I worthy of this favor? Do I deserve it? Did I try to please my parents and teachers? Was I always obedient? Did I do my

duty?" If you can conscientiously say yes, then you may express your wish.

David, the shepherd-boy who slew the giant Goliath, was invited to live at the king's palace, and he became a great friend of the king's son, Jonathan. David and Jonathan soon loved each other greatly, and the Lord and all the people loved David very much. This made the king very jealous, and he resolved to kill this popular young soldier. When Jonathan learned of the evil intentions of his father, he told David to go away from the palace for three days. "After three days," he said, "I will come to your hiding-place, and I will shoot three arrows, and say: 'Haste; stay not, which means that Saul will surely kill you.'" After the time was up Jonathan went out at the time he said, and a little lad went with him. He sent the lad on before him so that he might find the arrows he was to shoot. Then he shot an arrow that passed over the lad. And Jonathan cried out aloud, saying: "The arrow is beyond thee; make haste; stay not." And David heard the words, and he knew from those words that he must flee. Then David rose up and fled from Saul. Jonathan loved David, and he helped him to escape from his father; and they made a covenant together that they would be kind to each other forever.

Children, God has placed us in this world to work, not for play or recreation, or for eating and drinking. The dear little swallow builds her nest; she has to gather every bit of food, and may rest only at night. People, like birds, must work. Suppose that the baker were to stop baking bread, or that the farmer would not work the fields, or that the laborer would not go to his shop, what a queer world this would be! God will not give us anything without labor. He wants us to work. Only he who

works faithfully can enjoy rest and recreation. St. Paul says: "If any man will not work, neither let him eat" (II Thes., iii. 10). Children, before you ask your parents in future for any favor, ask yourselves: "Am I worthy; do I deserve it?" With a good conscience you can enjoy a favor when you deserve it.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

FALSE FRIENDS

"Beware of false prophets" (Matt., vii. 15).

The Prophet Jeremias one day went through the streets of Jerusalem with a rope around his neck and a bundle of wood on his back. He stopped at every corner where he saw a crowd had gathered, and cried out: "Do penance; your sins cry to heaven for vengeance. The king of Babylon shall come and make you his slaves. God is angry at you, because you disobeyed Him by worshipping idols." Some of the princes of Juda demanded that Jeremias should be put to death. "For," they said, "he makes the people afraid, because he says the Lord will send famine and pestilence upon us, and will give the city to the King of Babylon. That is all a lie." And the people look upon Jeremias as their enemy. The wicked people, therefore, took Jeremias, and let him down with cords into a deep pit that was in the prison; at the bottom of the pit was mire, into which Jeremias sank.

The princes of Juda would not obey the Lord nor believe the prophet, who was a true friend of the people. His words came true. Jerusalem was besieged for eighteen months. The bread was all gone in the city; there was no more left for the people to eat. The Temple at Jerusalem was burned to the ground, and the palace of the king, and the houses of the people; and the enemy broke down the walls of the city. The people of Jeru-

salem who were not slain were made captives. So the Kingdom of Juda was ended on account of the sins of the people. The words of the Prophet Jeremias came true, for the King of Babylon came and forced all the people into exile.

How foolish the Jews were to listen to the princes of Juda, who were the false prophets! In to-day's Gospel Jesus warns His disciples to avoid such people. They seem to be your friends by their nice words and manners, but in their hearts they want to destroy you. To this very day false prophets are scattered throughout the world. Their appearance is very attractive, and their words are sugar-coated just to ensnare you and bring about your ruin. A good country girl had accepted a position in New York. On taking leave of her mother, she was advised to be cautious about her companions. In a very light-hearted way she remarked: "Mother, do not fret; my friends will not do me any harm." The attractive, pious young girl was soon surrounded by many admirers. She was captivated by their polished manners and by their flattery. Gradually she dropped her prayers and stayed away from Holy Mass. After she had been led into sin, her eyes were opened, and she learned that those who looked so innocent were only hypocrites who successfully schemed and brought about her destruction.

Children, some day you will be thrown into the company of strangers. You will meet boys and girls, men and women. To your face they will appear charming; they may give you presents. They will seem nicer to you than your pastor, or your teachers, or even nicer than your parents. You will, perhaps, say: "These friends surely mean well toward me." Are they true friends? Are they not rather false prophets of Jerusalem, who

outwardly look like lambs but in their hearts are devouring wolves?

Children, you can soon tell if your friend has your interest at heart. Jesus said: "A tree is known by its fruit." If a companion is good, you will know it by his deeds. If your friend acts contrary to instructions you have received from your parents or from your pastor, if he does not serve God faithfully—then he is not your true friend, he is a false prophet. And if he flatters you as Judas did our Lord in the garden of Olives, do not believe him. Go away from him before it is too late.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

A TRUSTWORTHY SERVANT

"Here now it is required among the dispensers, that a man be found faithful" (I Cor., iv. 2).

In to-day's Gospel we read of the unjust steward. The world at present is full of such stewards. We have learned how badly Joseph of Egypt had been treated by his very jealous and bad brothers. The last thing they resorted to was to sell him to a rich man, who was an officer in the king's army. He lived in a big house and had many servants to work for him; so, needing another, he bought Joseph. On being taken into a strange land, Joseph was not afraid. He knew that God was with him, and consequently he was brave and cheerful in exile, and did his work well. When his rich master saw he was so willing, he made Joseph the head of his house, and gave him charge of all that he had.

That was a fine position for Joseph. But one day someone asked him to do something wrong, and because he said "No," he was cast into prison. Joseph was well aware that God took an interest in him; and so he continued happy and bright even in prison. He looked around for someone whom he could help. There were lots of unhappy prisoners there, and Joseph aided them all. Then, when the keeper of the prisoners saw, as the rich officer had seen, that the Lord was with Joseph, he put him in charge of the whole prison and everybody in

it. The prisoners must have been glad to have that splendid, cheerful Joseph taking care of them. After a time one of the prisoners was let out. He was a servant of the king, and he told the king about Joseph. So the king sent for him, and, when he saw that God was with Joseph, he kept him in his palace. He took his ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's finger, and dressed him in fine clothes, and put a gold chain around his neck. Then the king gave him a chariot to ride in, and made him a ruler over all the land of Egypt.

Children, Joseph was most generously rewarded for having been faithful in great and in small things. The trust that had been placed in him was not in vain.

Most of you will seek employment later outside of your home. One may go to a farmer, another to a factory, still another to a carpenter or to an artist. The girls may be employed as cooks, or as governesses, or stenographers, or in stores. Some will go to a small town, others to a large city. Many are afraid to go and work for strangers. You need not be frightened if you follow the good example of Joseph of Egypt: be faithful to God and ever trustworthy. When your master or your mistress can say: "We can depend on this boy. We have unlimited confidence in that girl. They are punctual and exact," then you will be happy.

It is at home that you must learn how to be punctual and obedient. Every day you must train yourself in being exact in your work. If mother tells you to take care of your little sister, you will do so. But, while fulfilling this duty, you should not run to the window to look out; you must not go to the street and play with your companions; your strict duty is to look after your little sister, as your mother told you. This is often tiresome and tedious, but, if you do your duty, it will make you

trustworthy. Again, if you are sent on an errand and told to be back in a half-hour, you must not tarry in the street to look at the store-windows or play with your companions. If you wish to be good, you will be punctual and return in a half-hour. By always doing what you are told when you are young, you will become a useful member of society, and everybody will like to have you because you are trustworthy, punctual and obedient.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

IF JESUS APPEARED IN OUR CHURCH

"My house is the house of prayer" (Luke, xix. 46).

The time was near for the Feast of the Passover, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem to keep it. When He came to the Temple, He found in the Court of the Gentiles men who had brought oxen and sheep and doves there to sell for sacrifices. There were other men who had tables, on which were pieces of silver money. This money was Jewish money, and was called the half-shekel. We are told that each Jew gave one of these half-shekels to the priests each year to buy sacrifices, or whatever else might be needed at the Temple. The men at the tables were money-changers. They exchanged, or sold, the half-shekels to those Jews who wanted to give them to the priests. But Jesus was much displeased to find men selling in the Court of the Temple, and He made a scourge or whip of small cords, and drove them all out, and also the sheep and the oxen. Then He poured out the changers' money on the ground and threw down their tables, and said to those who sold doves: "Take them away. My Father's house is a place for prayer, not a place to buy and sell in." And, while He was at the Feast of the Passover, many believed in Him when they saw the miracles He did.

If Christ suddenly stood before you, children, while you were here in church during Holy Mass or during

Sunday School, or whilst you were preparing for confession, very often He would be filled with holy anger. Holding a scourge over your heads, He would say: "Go away. My house is a house of prayer, but you have turned it into a show-house, where you talk and laugh and look around!"

Children, after God had created the world with its many flowers and trees, with its mountains and valleys, with its meadows and seas, gazing upon it He rejoiced and was glad. His joy is equally great when He can look down upon a church full of devout and prayerful children, just the way He wants it to be. If people notice so much that is not right in church, how much more does not God see if your conduct is unbecoming! For instance, you see a boy kneeling in a pew. His mother gave him a prayer-book to use in church, but he keeps it in his pocket. Instead of praying, he laughs and talks with his neighbor. Again, see that girl. She looks about the church, up at the gallery, or up at the ceiling, instead of having her eyes on the altar. By the conduct of those children you can tell that they are only present with their body. Their minds and their hearts are on the street or at play. But God sees not only their disrespectful conduct, but their thoughts and desires. The church is not a place in which to talk or to laugh or to gaze about. It is a place of prayer, even if you are all alone without being observed by the teacher, or priest, or parent. God is always present in the church. He is there to be adored, not to be insulted.

As often as you go to church, remember the story of the burning bush. Moses saw fire come out of a bush that grew on the mountain, and, as he drew closer to the bush, he heard God calling out from it, saying: "Moses, Moses, take off thy shoes from thy feet, because the place

whereon thou standest is holy ground." The church is also a holy, consecrated spot. You need not pull off your shoes, but you must put away all distracting thoughts and try to be attentive and recollected, for the place is holy.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

JUDGMENT—RIGHT OR WRONG

"Judge not" (Matt., vii. 1).

Jesus told the truth when He said that the Pharisee left the church less justified. Nobody likes a person who brags about his virtues and condemns others. God loves only those who are just and humble. But, children, have you not often played the part of the Pharisee? Have you not often considered yourself beyond reproach? Have you not repeatedly accused others?

The children who constantly tell on others are unkind. They may be compared to a cat that is lying in wait for a mouse. If the mouse makes its appearance, the cat pounces upon it. If someone does a foolish thing in school or perhaps smiles in church, or if on the playground someone strikes another, the tattler goes at once to the teacher or to the parents and reports it—perhaps even exaggerating. He forgets his own faults. All children who knowingly do this are surely hypocrites. On the other hand, sometimes it is necessary to bring charges against your comrades and companions.

The old patriarch, Jacob, the father of Joseph of Egypt, had a large farm and lots of sheep, cows, and camels. His twelve sons had to mind the sheep. For many days and for many weeks they remained on the pasture and did not return home. Now Jacob loved Joseph more than all his other children, because he was

more obedient and kind than all his other children. The brothers of Joseph were not all good, and they committed many sins while they were away from their old father. One day Joseph went out in the field with his brothers to feed his father's flock. And he came home to his father and told him of some wicked thing that his brothers had done. It was right for him to tell of this, so that his father might speak to the boys about it, and command them to do so no more. Joseph would never join in their bad talk.

When his brothers saw how much the father loved Joseph, they hated him, and could not speak friendly to him. And when they heard of Joseph's dreams, they were displeased, because it seemed that some day he would be greater than they. Soon after this his big brothers caught Joseph out in a field, and put him into a deep pit. Later they sold him to camel drivers.

It might happen in your life that you will have to report your brother or your sister or even your best friend. But they must have done something very bad. If your brother or sister is seen stealing, or ill-treats little children, or does something impure, or is heard using bad language, you are obliged to report it. If something bad comes under your notice for the first time, you need not tell on anyone. Call the boy or girl aside, and say: "Do not do that again; that is a sin. It is wrong to annoy little children, to say bad words, to do impure things. I shall have to report you if you do not stop." Jesus tells us what to do: "If thy brother shall offend against thee, go and rebuke him between thee and him alone. . . . If he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more. . . . And if he will not hear them, tell the Church" (Matt., xviii, 15-17).

But, children, you must be very careful when you

accuse anybody. Do not exaggerate. If you saw a boy steal twice, do not say three times. You must tell just what happened. You should not feel happy if you have to accuse your companion of doing wrong, and so have him punished. We ought to feel sad when we see others commit sin, and think of our own weakness, for we, too, may fall some day.

Children, your accusation when made in the right way, and in the right spirit, is an act of Christian charity and is pleasing to God. The naughty child will receive a reprimand or punishment. And, if the boy or girl mends his ways, you will share the glory of having made him better. Others may call you a tale-bearer or a tattler; do not mind that. You wanted to please God by doing a good deed. After Joseph had denounced his brothers, they made fun of him. But his father was glad that he had such a conscientious son, and he rewarded him with a new coat. God protected Joseph and made him ruler of a prosperous people. God will also give you credit and reward you, if you are instrumental in preventing sin.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

AN ABOMINATION

"The mouth that believeth, killeth the soul" (Wis., i. 11).

Jesus made the deaf and dumb man very happy. He could hear the birds singing. He could listen to what his friends were saying. How very grateful he must have felt to our Lord! Rest assured that he guarded his tongue; he never would tell a lie or use bad words.

John, the miller's son, was always upright and good. It was on a Wednesday afternoon in winter that he and his friend Charlie were playing in the garden. They were building a large fort made out of snow. They were so busy that they did not notice the time passing till they were overtaken by darkness. John forgot all about his homework. The next day in school the teacher called for the pupils' homework. John took out his copybook and stood in line. He became very nervous and blushed. What should he tell the teacher? A very severe punishment awaited him. The devil tempted him to tell a lie. As the teacher asked him for his homework he said: "All afternoon I had to help my mother cleaning house, and in the evening we had no more oil in the lamp. My mother told me to give you this excuse." Those words almost choked him. He escaped the punishment. The teacher believed what he said. This was a most unhappy day for John. There seemed to be a heavy weight hanging around his neck. He could not laugh; he could not smile. He was a sick boy. His soul was sick. A horrid and

severe sickness affected the soul; and that disease is called a *lie*.

In Samaria there lived a very holy Prophet, whose name was Eliseus. The infirm came to him and he healed them. One day Naaman, the captain of the army of the Syrians, who was a leper, stood at the door of the house of Eliseus, begging to be cured. After Naaman had complied with the Prophet's orders, and had been cured, he came back to reward him. Eliseus refused to accept any presents.

Naaman left the Prophet's house to go back to his own land. But, when he had gone a little way, the servant of Eliseus said to himself: "Since my master would take no present from this man, I will run after him and take something for myself." So Giezi—such was the servant's name—followed Naaman; and when Naaman saw him running after him, he stopped his chariot and came down to meet him, and said: "Is all well?" Giezi answered: "All is well; but my master sent me to tell thee that, since thou didst leave him, there came two young men, who are sons of the Prophet; and he asked thee to give them a talent of silver and some garments." The servant took the gifts the captain had offered and hid them in a secret place. But the Lord had told Eliseus what his servant had done. The Prophet questioned Giezi where he had been. "Thy servant has been nowhere," Giezi answered. "Let me tell you," Eliseus answered, "Naaman came down from his chariot to meet thee and gave thee money and garments and riches. Therefore, because thou hast done this wicked thing and told a lie, the leprosy which Naaman has been cured of shall be on thee and on thy children forever." And as Eliseus spoke, the leprosy came on Giezi, and he went out from him covered with it as white as snow.

That was, indeed, a very severe punishment for telling lies. If any of you have been guilty of lying, the good God may not have punished you as yet. But, if everyone who knows you could look into your heart as God can, then he would see a cancer sore which grows larger and larger, and gradually kills the soul. You were a child of God before your first lie. That first lie put a stain on your pure soul; disorder reigned in your heart and you became a child of Satan. The devil told the first lie, and all those who follow him are his children. How sad, how very sad, is this condition! You yourself are dissatisfied.

Children, we must avoid every falsehood, no matter how small, even if it entails a punishment. Rather take a corporal punishment than kill the soul by a lie.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

TRUE TO GOD

"The woman gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Gen., iii. 12).

Many children imitate Adam in the Garden of Eden. If they have done any wrong, they try to hide behind someone else. "And others did the same," is what they say. The fact that others have done wrong to you, or with you, does not excuse your sin. You ought to try and do just the opposite. When others do evil, you must just make up your mind to do good.

In the Gospel of to-day we read of the merchant from Samaria who did a good deed, whilst a priest and a levite passed on, paying no attention to the wounded man.

The Holy Book tells us of the three youths in the fiery furnace who were *true to God*. The King of Babylon did not know about our God in heaven, but prayed to blocks of metal and wood and stone with ugly images carved upon them. He fought many battles, and one of the battles he fought against a people who believed in God. He won the victory, for the people were not good, and God wanted them to lose in order to teach them to be better.

The king worshipped a gorgeous image made of shining yellow gold, and it was very big and high. It was so huge that it had to be set up on a plain—a great field with no trees in it. The king was so well pleased with the image and all the comments made about it, that,

being surrounded by all his people of high and low rank, he commanded that at the sound of music all should fall down and worship the golden image that he had set up. And he who refused to do so was to be cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace at the same hour. The furnace was there in front of them, built into a cave of a rock so that you could see the flames glowing and leaping. It was very large, so that many men could be thrown into it, if they dared to disobey the king.

There were three men who stood up straight and looked before them, and did not bow their heads, or bend their knees before that golden image. They were brought before the king. They positively refused to serve his gods, or worship the golden image which he had set up. One of the young men answered the king, after he had threatened to punish them by fire: "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thy hands, O king."

Children, this is one of the finest speeches in the Bible. The king was full of fury, and he ordered that the furnace, which was already blazing hot, should be made seven times hotter. The young men were bound hands and feet with cords, and were thrown into the midst of the furnace. The flames killed the men who approached the furnace. From the place where the king was sitting he could look right into the furnace. He was greatly astonished to see the young men walk around in the furnace amidst the flames; for God would not let the fire burn them. Then the king came near to the mouth of the burning furnace and cried out: "Ye servants of the Most High God, come forth. The Lord who has sent His angels and saved His servants who trusted in Him, there is no other God that can save like Him." Then the king

made the young men greater than they had been before in the Province of Babylon.

Children, we will make up our minds to follow the good example of these three youths. When you are in church with your companions on a Saturday afternoon preparing for confession, you will find someone who will laugh and talk and fool. They are committing sin. You are going to be *true to God* and say: "I will be good."

All the disciples gathered around our Lord one day, and He began to talk to them about two roads that lead through life. The one, He said, is a very broad road, very wide, smooth, evenly paved; along this road you need not fear hurt or inconvenience. The road is on a nice downward grade, and many people travel on it. Very close by is another road, narrow and rocky. Here you may easily trip, for the road is all uphill, and few people travel on it. This narrow and rocky road leads to heaven. The other road, which is so easy and comfortable, leads to hell. Bad people choose this latter road, and they wind up in hell. Children, even if everybody else wants to travel on the broad and easy road, still you must say: "I am going to *be true to God*, and go along the narrow path to heaven."

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

INGRATITUDE

"Were not ten made clean? and where are the nine?" (Luke, xvii. 17).

After the great war, a poor wounded soldier with his head bandaged and his arm in a sling boarded an electric car in one of our large cities. Every passenger looked upon him with pity, and gave him all consideration. After the car had gone a few squares, a lady of fashion got on, and, in a very proud and haughty manner, sat down next to the soldier. Her look showed her disdain and disgust. "Why these soldiers," she haughtily said, "with their carbolic acid smell, ride in public conveyances, I do not understand." The occupants of the car were horrified at the remark of this ungrateful woman, for this soldier had suffered and had been ready to sacrifice his life for the safety and comfort of this woman. Such ingratitude!

Children, you have a good mother at home. This morning before you were awake, she was getting your Sunday clothes ready. She had to prepare breakfast for you, and had gone to church to pray for you. Your good mother is most anxious about you, day and night; she deprives herself at table, in order that you may be satisfied or enjoy little luxuries; she deprives herself of sleep, when she knows that you are in need of her. How do you requite your good mother for her kindness?

Very often you do not even thank her. If things do not go your way or do not suit you, you begin to grumble and growl; many a time your good mother sheds tears. Is that very proper on your part? Is that grateful? You would make her happy by your obedience, your reverence, and your gratitude.

There was a long stony road running from Jerusalem to Jericho, cut through a mountain. The huge rocks were used as hiding-places by robbers, who would lie in wait until some traveller came along, when they would spring out and pounce on their victim, knock him senseless, and rob him. One day a man was going along that lonely road. When he had reached the darkest and loneliest part of the way, some robbers sprang upon him, tore his clothes from him, beat him, and departed, leaving him half-dead upon the road. He lay there cold, suffering, and miserable, but suddenly a light came into his face and he opened his eyes. Another traveller was near him; he was a priest from the golden Temple in Jerusalem. When this Jewish priest saw the poor, bleeding man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and went on. The poor man closed his eyes again; he was getting very weak, and thought that he must die there alone in that dismal place. A second man came along on his way to Jericho. This one was a singer; he sang sweet hymns in the golden Temple to which the priest belonged. When he saw the bleeding, naked man lying there, he stopped at once, crossed the road, and looked down upon him. But he, too, went on to Jericho.

At length a third man stopped and came over to him. This traveller, a Samaritan, came from another part of the country. The priest and the singer did not like the Samaritans; they would not speak to them when they met. But in God's sight this Samaritan was a hundred

times better than they. For he did not leave the poor man; the first thing the sufferer noticed was that soothing oil and wine were being poured into his wounds. Then he was tenderly lifted and set upon the back of the Samaritan's horse. The good Samaritan, leading the horse along the road, cheered the rider with comforting words. Soon they reached an inn, and there the Samaritan took a room, and put the sick man to bed, and took care of him all night long. This good Samaritan is held up by God to us as an example of the truly charitable man, whilst the others showed themselves most unkind.

Again the Gospel tells us how ten lepers came to Jesus and were cured by Him. Nine of them did not think it worth their while to return and thank our Lord. Only one did so, and on his knees thanked Jesus for what He had done. This man, too, was a Samaritan, one who was despised by the Jews. All we know about this man, is that he had a good and noble heart. Children, you must never fail to be grateful for even the smallest favor. Let God and man see that you have good and grateful hearts.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

DUMB CREATURES PREACH

"Behold the birds of the air" (Matt., vi. 26).

You have heard of St. Francis, how he gathered the birds of the forest together and gave them a sermon. They sat quietly on the branches of the trees and listened very attentively. It is said of St. Anthony that, when the people of Naples did not listen to him, he went to the seashore and called on the fish in the sea to come up and listen to the word of God. And the dwellers of the deep assembled with their heads appearing on the surface of the water. Children, did you ever think that the birds and the fish and the other animals preach a sermon to us? Our Lord tells us so in to-day's Gospel. "Think of the birds," He said, "they do not sow seed in the fields, nor reap grain and carry it to barns to lay it up; yet they always have enough to eat, because God feeds them." But God cares more for you than He does for the birds.

Long ago God made use of the most stupid animal, a donkey, to reprimand a very bright man. After many years God led the Jews out of the desert. The Children of Israel journeyed and came to the plains of Canaan. The king of this country was frightened when he saw the hordes of men, women, and children coming, because he thought that they had come to make war against him, and there were too many of them for his soldiers to resist them. Therefore, he sent for a man named Balaam

to come and curse the Israelites—that is, to ask God to send some great evil upon them. The king promised him silver and gold.

Now, Balaam loved riches. He was willing to curse the Children of Israel for the silver and gold which the king promised to give him. In a dream, however, God had made known to Balaam that He would be displeased if he went to the king. But Balaam loved gold and silver more than he loved the Lord, so he saddled his donkey and started to go. The donkey was a good animal; she was always obedient and never gave any trouble. Many a time she had carried her master over the desert.

God was angry with Balaam for going; and He sent His Angel to stand before him in the way with a drawn sword in his hand. Balaam could not see the Angel, but the donkey saw him, and she turned out of the way into the field. Then Balaam struck the donkey to make her go back. They came to a place where there was a wall on each side. The donkey pressed very close to the wall to get by, but she hurt Balaam's foot in doing so, and he struck her again. She went on farther still, and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn, and there she fell down upon the ground, covering Balaam. Then Balaam was very angry, and he struck his donkey with the staff he held in his hand. Now something wonderful happened. God opened the mouth of the donkey, and made her speak like a man: "What have I done to thee that thou hast struck me these three times? Hast thou not ridden upon me ever since I was thine until this day? If I could not please thee to-day, there is a special reason. Look ahead."

Then the Lord made Balaam see the Angel, who stood before him with a sword in his hand and with his face

bowed down to the ground. And the Angel said to him: "Why did you strike your donkey three times? Learn a lesson from your faithful animal. Your great desire for gold and silver blinded you; that is why you did not see me. God does not want you to go to that pagan king. Your donkey understood the warning, but you did not."

Just what the Angel told Balaam applies to you, my children. Every animal, no matter how small, teaches you a lesson. Never torment an animal. God gave us the animals that we should take care of them. That is why we should never torment a dog, nor tease a little pup; never whip a horse nor destroy a bird's nest. The animals teach us a lesson and preach a sermon, although they did not go to school. If you pet a dog and give him something to eat, he will always run after you and even defend you, if necessary. Many a dog has been so faithful to his master that he starved himself to death while guarding the grave of his benefactor. Such an animal teaches you gratitude.

The busy bee also teaches us a lesson. Hardly has the sun risen above the horizon when the bee leaves the hive and flies from flower to flower gathering honey and storing it in the hive. If anybody interferes with the bee's work, he will get stung. The bee thus preaches diligence and industry to children. Again, look at the bird. There is a nest full of young ones. The mother bird flies about all day, catching flies, gnats and caterpillars to feed its young. The mother bird, entirely forgetful of herself, labors from sunrise to sunset. This good bird exhorts you to have love and charity for others. Forget yourself and think of others. Your greatest joy should be to make others happy.

Every creature of the animal creation tells us of the love of God, of His great power and His goodness. One

by one they remind us that God made them and that He cares for them, day and night and in all seasons. "Serve the Lord with us," they say. "Praise Him and trust in Him as we do." Look around and listen to the dumb creatures. They tell you of God, and they may help you to reach heaven.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

IN GOD WE TRUST

"But the salvation of the just is from the Lord, and He is their protector in the time of trouble" (Ps. xxxvi. 39).

The widow followed her son with a very heavy heart. It seemed that God had forsaken her. Her good husband had died some years before, and now her son was dead. Poor woman, at last she was all alone in the world. But her trust in God was not shaken. She was heartbroken at her loss. There seemed to be no one in the world to say a kind word to her. But, just when she seemed most inconsolable, our Lord stood before the bier and told her son to rise. And her sorrow was turned into joy.

So, children, when things look very bad, God is always near. A little boy by the name of Ishmael was a playmate of Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sara. For a long while they had been peaceful and happy companions together, but one day a quarrel arose between them. Therefore, Sara was displeased with Ishmael, and she asked Abraham to send him and his mother away. Abraham, however, did not wish to send them away, and it troubled him when Sara asked him to do this. But God spoke to Abraham, and told him to do as Sara had asked. So he rose up early in the morning and took bread and a bottle of water, and gave them to Agar, Ishmael's mother. The bottles of that country were what we would call sacks or bags. They were made of

goat-skins, folded over and sewed tightly together around the edges, except at the neck, which was left open for the water to pass through. And when Abraham had given Agar some bread and a bottle of water, putting this on her shoulder, he sent her and her son away.

Then Agar took her boy into the wilderness. When all the water in the bottle was gone, and they had no more to drink, the child grew weak, and Agar thought that he would die. And she laid him under a bush in the shade, and went a little way off and sat down and wept, for she did not want to see her son die. And God heard her weeping; and the Angel of God called to her from heaven and said: "What aileth thee, Agar " Then the Angel told her not to be afraid, but to lift up Ishmael from the place where she had laid him, and to hold him in her arms. And God showed her a well of water that was there in the wilderness, and she went to it and filled the bottle and gave some to her son to drink, and he became strong and well again. After this God was kind to Ishmael, and he grew up and lived in the wilderness and was an archer; he shot with a bow and arrow. He became a Prince of Juda.

This story tells you that you will never go amiss, no matter how dark things seem, if you trust in God. Children, in life you will have to meet with many setbacks. A terrible sickness may overtake you and confine you to bed for many months. The doctor may have no hope of your recovery. You may not have a cent to your name; perhaps no man will lend you any money; you may be starving even; bitter tears will cover your cheeks, like Ishmael, at these reverses. But, if you *trust in God* and do your best, you need not fear; remember Ishmael. God is still with you, and He will hear you, if you only pray to Him.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON AHEAD

"So run that you may obtain" (I Cor., ix. 24).

Most of us want to get ahead. At any public performance in your school hall, boys and girls are constantly pushing on ahead to get the first seats. At an excursion boys and girls board the train in a hurry, and look for the seats near a window. When the teacher shows a picture in school, the forward boys and girls get to the front and force the other pupils into the background. In your family, when your mother cuts a pie or a cake, you push your sister back, and make her cry because you want the biggest piece. Do you think that this *on ahead* is proper for a Christian child? Is our Lord pleased with such conduct?

The story in the Gospel tells us that a rich Pharisee invited Jesus to dinner. Now, there were among the Jews some men called Scribes, and others called Pharisees, who pretended to be very holy. They studied the Scriptures and explained them to the people; but they themselves did not do as the Scriptures said. For, although they obeyed some of the commandments and were careful not to work on the Sabbath, and said long prayers in the synagogues and even at the corners of the streets, yet they did this that others might see them and praise them for doing it. For these men were hypocrites—that is, persons who pretended to be good, while in their hearts they were wicked. With Jesus many other

guests were invited. Our Lord very modestly took the last place, and waited till the dining-room was filled. And many crowded in, choosing the first place at table. Jesus, speaking of this conduct, said: "Sit not down in the first place, but take the lowest place; he who is modest and retiring will be honored by My Father in heaven." The Divine Saviour will look upon you with disfavor, if you are always looking for the first place at table.

If there is a chance to do good, then you must *go ahead*. If your mother or father wishes you to do anything, you ought to say at once: "Mother, I will do it." When the church bell rings on Sunday for Holy Mass, young folks are very slow in entering the church and going to the pews; everyone stands slovenly in front of the church and seems so indifferent. You ought to go *on ahead* to your pew, and kneel down and pray.

At the end of recess, when the teacher calls "Silence!" some never keep quiet; this one talks and that one laughs. Children, this is the time where you ought to be *on ahead*, and keep silence at the first signal.

Josue, a great general, was chosen by the Lord to succeed Moses. He was such a good soldier, so obedient and brave in doing his duty, that he was given command of a whole army while he was still young. Josue wore brightly colored clothes, with armor over them. That means a shield and a helmet and pieces of brass on his arms and legs. In those days soldiers had no guns, but they carried swords with which they fought. One day this young general was standing outside of a city which had a high wall around it. Inside that wall were thousands of men who hated the Children of Israel. Josue was trying to make them come out and fight his army. But they would not come out, because they were afraid. There did not seem to be any way to make them fight,

for the city walls were so high that no one could climb over them from the outside.

Josue went out of the camp and came near to the walls of the city of Jericho. As he looked up, he saw a man standing there, with a drawn sword in his hand. And Josue came to him, and said: "Art thou for us or for our enemies?" The man answered: "As captain of the Lord's army I am come." He called the army of Israel the Lord's army, and he meant to tell Josue that he had come as their captain, to show them how they could gain the victory over their enemies. Then Josue bowed to the earth and venerated him, for this man was an Angel of God—the same who come to Abraham's tent and told him that he would destroy Sodom, and who wrestled with Jacob when he was coming back from Laban's house in Canaan.

Then the Angel told him that God wanted him to have that city and all the men in it. He told him how to take it. The Israelites did not know that an Angel gave directions to their general. Every day for six days Josue's army marched once around the city and back to the camp, but on the seventh day the line did not go back. They went on marching, until they had been around seven times. And while the priests blew upon the trumpets, the whole army gave a great shout, and behold the wall of the city fell down flat! Then the soldiers rushed in and took the people prisoners. So God gave the city to Josue and his army, and I think that one of the reasons why He did it was because Josue went right *on ahead*, and did what the Angel told him to do.

In obedience, at work, in giving assistance to others, in doing good deeds, you must be *on ahead*. Be a child that pleases God! And, when the time to die comes, you will be *on ahead* for heaven.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

YOUR LOYALTY

"Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ" (Rom., viii. 35).

Children, some time ago I asked a little girl, "Do you love God?" and she answered: "Indeed, I do. He makes the stars shine so bright at night, and He makes the roses and the lilies grow, He gave me a good mother and a dear little brother. He gives me food and drink; and, best of all, He has a place reserved in heaven for me."

Truly, you often prayed to God Almighty in heaven, and told Him that you loved Him with all your might. You have often repeated the acts of faith, hope, and charity. Your love prompted you to put a bouquet of flowers before the image of the Sacred Heart in your home every day. Is your love sincere? Will it stand the test?

Bible History tells us of a young boy, the youngest of the Machabees. In the Old Testament God forbade the Jews the use of pork. He wanted to try their obedience. To spite God a pagan king ordered the Jews to eat swine's flesh. It came to pass that a good mother and her seven sons were arrested by the king's soldiers. The king commanded the mother and her seven sons to eat the meat placed before them. They all heroically refused. The seven brothers were scourged to make them eat the pork, but the eldest brother spoke to the king:

"We will not eat of it, for we would rather die than disobey the laws of God." Then the king, in great anger, commanded that his tongue should be cut out, and parts of his feet and hands cut off, and afterwards that he should be burned slowly over a fire as long as there was any life in him. As soon as he was dead, the other brothers were asked whether they would obey the king; and, as they refused, one by one they were tortured and put to death. The youngest boy remained. The king treated him very kindly, and promised him fine clothes, fine meals, and all kinds of toys if he would eat swine's flesh. The little boy said: "No, king; God has forbidden it. And I love God with all my heart. I will not eat!" Since the king did not succeed with flattery, he used force and threats. He gave the boy to understand that he also could be put to death if he continued to be stubborn. But the little boy courageously replied: "If I can suffer pain for my God, I will do it willingly. I love Him so much that I am glad to give up my life. He commanded me not to eat swine's flesh, and I will obey." Then the king, being incensed with anger, treated him more cruelly. So the boy died undefiled and loyal to God.

Children, this little boy gave a true proof of his love. He loved God with all his mind and with all his heart and with all his might. Will you ever be called on to prove your love for God? Would you have courage enough to stand the test? I have a very grave fear that some of you would show yourselves cowards. Only this morning on rising some of you possibly omitted your morning prayers, because you did not feel like saying any. God was waiting for your morning offering, but He waited in vain. Do you still say that you love God?

Here is another instance. A good friend gave you several apples. You were so glad to eat them. On your

way home you met a companion who was poor and hungry. He asked you for an apple, but you turned away with a flat refusal. That was another test of your loyalty to God. Divine Providence sent this boy in your way to see if you would love him for God's sake. But you did not. You showed that you were very selfish. The good mother of the Machabees must have trained her boys well in self-denial for the love of God. It was this that made them strong in the great test of their loyalty.

Children, remember empty words do not count. It is deeds that count. Show your loyalty to God by doing freely and for His sake things which you are not obliged to do. Every day do some good deed. Of your own free will, go to some nearby church and pay a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. Ask your mother if you may do an errand for her. In your savings bank you have a collection of nickels and dimes. When you meet a poor, blind, or crippled man or woman, give some of your savings for the love of God. In the poor we see God. They are His favorites, and, whatever kindness you show them, Jesus considers as done to Him.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE GREATEST EVIL

"Thy sins are forgiven thee" (Matt., ix. 2).

Jesus had come into the City of Capharnaum. When the people heard of it, they gathered together at the house where He was, and He preached to them there. The houses of the Jews were usually square, and but one story high. The roofs were flat, with a wall or railing around them, so that persons might safely walk there. In the center of the house was a large square room called the court. Over this court there was no roof, but in time of rain or much heat an awning or covering of some kind was stretched across the opening. It was into such a house as this that Jesus had now come. And some men brought a man who was sick of the palsy and unable to walk, so that Jesus might heal him. Since they could not come in at the door on account of the crowd, they went up on the roof, and taking off the covering, let the man down on his mattress into the court below where Jesus was.

When Jesus saw how much faith they had, He spoke to the sick man, saying: "Thy sins are forgiven thee." But some of the Scribes and Pharisees who were sitting there said to themselves: "Who is this that pretends to forgive sins, as if he were God?" Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them: "Why do you think these things in your hearts? Is it not as easy for Me to for-

give this man his sins as it is to cure him of his palsy? But to show you that I have power to forgive sins, I will make him well." Then He said to the sick man: "Stand up on thy feet, take up thy bed, and go to thy house." Immediately the man arose, stood on his feet, took up his bed, and went out before them all. The people who saw it were astonished. Our Lord did not mind so much the sickness of the body, but He saw the poor soul loaded down with mortal sins. That is why He said: "Thy sins are forgiven thee," for sin is a greater evil than sickness.

But some of you are happy in sin, and you firmly believe that there are greater evils than sin. You are down on your back with a great pain and burning up with fever. For weeks and weeks you are helpless. Day and night you look for sympathy. To you your illness is truly a great evil. In the lives of the Saints we read that they laughed at pain; they asked God to send them crosses and trials. Sickness, after all, cannot be such a great evil if the Saints prayed for it. Many a person has turned to God after a severe sickness and trial.

Maybe, some of you, dear children, are orphans. You have lost your good mother—the only parent left to guide you. You must have been crushed with grief when her coffin was lowered in the cold, cold ground. At home you missed somebody very, very dear to your heart. Your loss is indeed a great evil. Your good mother, however, is praying for her lonely child here on earth, and God will send some good-hearted person to take care of the orphan.

Is death the greatest evil? You and I must die. What a great evil! You have heard of many people praying for death, asking God to take them out of this world. After all, death cannot be such a great evil.

Whatever you may think and say, there is no greater evil than to live in mortal sin. And why is sin the greatest evil? Because God wants you to be sinless, for He hates and detests sin. The story of the little child held before the multitude, tells us how Jesus loved innocent children. He could not bear the thought that they would sin. On their way to Capharnaum the Apostles began to dispute with one another as to which of them should be the greatest. Jesus knew what they said. He called a little boy and set him in the midst of them, and told them that, unless they should put away their pride, they could not belong to the kingdom of heaven. "Whoever, therefore," He said, "is most humble and willing to obey like this little boy, will be the greatest in the kingdom of God." See what a great regard Jesus had for children! How very grieved He must feel when He knows that one of His beloved children has fallen and is living in mortal sin, an enemy of Him and His Father! And that is why sin is the greatest of all evils.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

A GREAT CHOICE

"But they neglected, and went their way" (Matt., xxii. 5).

On a Sabbath day, Jesus went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees, and, while there, he spoke a parable about a man who made a great supper. When everything had been set on the table, the man sent his servants to those who were invited, saying: "Come, for all things are now ready." But they all began to make excuses. The first said: "I have bought a piece of ground, and must go and see it; I pray that thou wilt have me excused." Another said: "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and am going to try them; I pray thee have me excused." And another said: "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." So the servant came and told his master these things. Then the master, being angry, said to him: "Go out quickly into the streets and bring into my house the poor, the lame, and the blind." And the servant did as he was commanded. As there was room for still more, the master said: "Go again through the streets and lanes of the city, and make the people come in, that my house may be filled; for none of those men who were first invited shall taste of my supper."

Children, be careful lest you be shut out by the Lord of Lords. The King of Kings, also, has prepared a great supper in His beautiful dining-hall in heaven. There is a

place for every human being. You are also invited. There is also a place for you. God is waiting for you to take that place.

But, dear children, you have often acted like those friends of the king when you preferred the pleasures of this life to heaven. On your way to church on a Sunday morning you saw a house on fire. This fire was so fascinating to you that some of you forgot all about going to Holy Mass. You liked the excitement more than you liked to assist at Mass. You remained away. You were disrespectful and ungrateful like the friends of the king.

Again, it may be that a companion tells you improper stories on your way home from school. He shows you nasty pictures. You know that it is sinful to listen to bad stories and to look at impure objects. Perhaps, you take great pleasure in this sinful pastime, and you encourage your companions by laughing. By your conduct you make your choice. You prefer your companion to God, and his dirty language to heaven.

Listen to the story about four brave and pious young men in the Old Testament. It is all about Daniel and his companions. They were chosen by the King of Babylon as servants in his palace. They were young and comely and quick to learn. The king wanted the four boys he had brought back to enjoy themselves as well as to keep strong, so every day he sent them food from his table. Do you think that is the kind of food which makes a boy or girl well and strong? Indeed, it is not. The sweet pies, and cake, and candy you eat do not make you one bit taller or rosier; but the bread, and the potatoes, and green vegetables do. And the longer you drink only pure water, the stronger men and women you will be.

One of the four boys, Daniel, knew this. I think their mothers had fed them always on good simple food, and

that was the reason they were so fair to look upon. A great deal of the food sent by the king had been offered to idols. Daniel and his companions, therefore, did not wish to eat it, lest they should offend the Lord. So Daniel spoke to the chief officer, and asked him not to make them eat of that rich food. He said that he and his companions would prefer vegetables and water. There was something else they did which helped them to keep strong and beautiful. They prayed to God every night and morning to help them in this heathen land. These boys used to open the windows of their rooms wide, and facing towards their old home they prayed God to take care of their mothers and fathers far away, and to help themselves to do what would please Him. Though they were forced to live in a pagan land amid the sin and the pleasures of the royal court, they did not forget the God of Israel. They made the best choice.

Children, every time you commit a mortal sin you prefer sin to God and your sinful pleasure to heaven. Be careful lest some day God should have to tell you that there is no place for you, and that it is filled by a boy from Africa; and that your place, little girl, has been taken by a gypsy maid from India, because you had lost your chance of heaven—because you had made another choice.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

OUR PARENTS

"Can a woman forget her infant?" (Is., xlix. 15).

There was at Capharnaum a centurion, or captain, in the Roman army. A servant whom he loved very much had taken sick and was about to die. When the centurion heard that Jesus was near, he sent some of the elders of the Jews, who were his friends, to ask Jesus to come and heal his servant. And the elders came and begged Jesus earnestly, saying: "Although the centurion is not a Jew, but a Roman, yet he loves the Jews, and has been kind to us; for with his own money he has built us a synagogue."

Then Jesus went with them towards the centurion's house. And the centurion went out to meet Jesus, because he thought his house unworthy to receive such a holy man. And he said that, if Jesus would only say the word, his servant would get well. Jesus, seeing this faith, told him to return home, and that his servant would get better. The man believed Jesus and went his way. And, as he was going towards his house, his servants met him, and they brought word that his servant was cured.

The young man had a very good and devoted master. Our parents are also very solicitous about us. When we are sick, our mother watches at our bedside all day; and in the evening, when good father comes home from work,

he takes her place all night. On many other occasions father and mother have shown their love and regard for their poor child. At Christmas, on a birthday—in fact, all year round—devoted parents shower their children with many kindnesses. And many a boy can say: “I have just as good a father as the centurion.” Thank God that He gave you such devoted parents.

The great prophet, Elias, for a long time stayed at the house of a widow who had a son. The widow and her boy became very fond of Elias. The little boy often loved to be with the “man of God.” Elias knew many beautiful stories, and the widow’s son would not grow tired listening to them, curled up on the floor or sitting beside his mother in front of a blazing fire. Elias told him about Jacob and the Angels, or the baby boy Moses, or Samuel to whom God spoke. But one day the boy did not climb up to the prophet’s room, which was situated in the attic. Elias missed him, and went down to see where he was. He found the mother crying, and the boy lay in her arms, weak and white and hardly breathing. While they watched, the poor boy stopped breathing, and his spirit went heavenwards.

When the mother saw that her child was dead, she was so wretched and unhappy that she could not stop weeping. “Give me thy son,” said Elias. And very tenderly he took the little boy out of his mother’s arms. He carried him up the staircase to his loft, and laid him upon his own bed. He got down on his knees and prayed most fervently to God. And three times he stretched himself upon the little body, crying: “O Lord, my God, I pray Thee let this child’s spirit come unto him again.” Then the color came back to the little boy’s cheeks; he breathed and opened his eyes; his beautiful soul had come back. Joyfully Elias lifted him in his arms and carried

him down the stairs. At the foot stood the mother weeping. When the mother raised her eyes, she saw her boy, with life and color in his face, smiling at her. She stretched out her arms towards him. All her sorrow turned to great joy.

Sometimes your parents are forced to scold you, and you think that you do not deserve it. Then a queer thought may come into your mind, and you feel meanly towards your parents. That is not right. Remember, also, that your father and mother have many worries at home and in business, and these may often be the cause of their sternness. But with all their harsh words they love you dearly still.

Some time ago a priest had to bury a child, whose parents lived on a canal boat. The father and mother were very poor. The whole family had to travel from town to town so as to eke out a miserable living. The father was a scissors grinder, but worked at anything. The good mother had to raise a very large family. The food was scarce, and she had to feed her children very sparingly. As the conduct of the children was anything but good, the parents had to scold them continually. One of the children died. Now, the mother who seemed to be so harsh wept incessantly and was inconsolable in her grief. The love for her child was a deeply rooted love—a mother's love, which never dies. So, if your parents seem very harsh with you and not to care for you, remember this is not really so, and that they have as great love for you as the good centurion of Capharnaum had for his servant.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

HARDHEARTED CHILDREN

"For judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy" (James, ii. 13).

Jesus tells us of a king who took an account of his servants. One was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. After the king heard the sad story, he was moved with pity. He let the servant go and forgave the debt. But, when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants who owed him a hundred pence; and laying hold of this unfortunate fellow, he throttled him, saying: "Pay what thou owest." And his fellow-servant falling down on his knees cried out to him: "Have patience with me and I will pay thee all." But he would not, and he went and cast him into prison till he paid the debt.

Very often God has reason to think how hard-hearted Christian children are. Perhaps, your father died after a lingering sickness. The burden of the whole family fell upon your mother. There are many of you in the same household. Day and night your good mother has to tire herself, and worry herself how to clothe and feed all of you. Your mother often looks sad, and many a tear she has shed. Ever since your father's death, your conduct perhaps has grieved her very much. You do not come home when she calls you; you remain away from Mass on Sundays; the neighbors complain to her

about your bad conduct. What annoyance you cause the family! Your dear mother is so good and so forgiving. How, then, can you be so hard-hearted?

In the Second Book of Samuel we read that King David had a son named Absalom. He had grown up, and among all the young men of the Children of Israel, none was so much praised for his beauty as he. From his feet to his head, there was no fault to be seen in him. His hair was very thick and long. But Absalom was wicked, and, when his brother Amnon sinned against him, he killed him and fled to another country.

When he came back to his house in Jerusalem, David at first would not see or speak to him, because he had slain his brother. Later, however, the king forgave him. Notwithstanding this, Absalom was bent on revenge, and by cunning and deceit he began to win over the people, so that they might proclaim him king, and force his father to leave the country. Finally, the king had to flee hastily out of Jerusalem. With his servants and many of the people of the city, he passed over the brook Kedron and went up towards the wilderness. And David said in sorrow: "My own son is trying to take away my life."

The Lord, however, decreed to punish Absalom for his great sin in rebelling against his father. The hostile armies met in a wood, and God gave David the victory. Of Absalom's army, twenty thousand men were slain. Absalom fled away on a mule; but, as the mule went under the thick branches of a great oak, Absalom's hair was caught among the branches. The mule raced on and left Absalom there, hanging above the ground. Joab, a friend of King David, took three darts in his hand, and went to the place where Absalom was, and thrust the darts into his body while he was yet alive, hanging in the

branches of the oak. Afterwards ten young men, who were servants to Joab, came and slew him. And they took Absalom and threw his dead body into a pit that was in the wood, and piled a great heap of stones over him. Children, you will surely admit that this was a well-deserved punishment for such a hard-hearted son.

A teacher who watches children at play, often thinks how cruel some Christian children are. He sees them at one time teasing an old man; at another time they are annoying a cripple; now they mock old persons; and now they plague a poor animal to death. Children, if you do this, where is your charity, where is your sympathy? Why are you so heartless?

You have heard the story in the Bible about the hard-hearted servant. You remember what happened to him. The king, hearing how he had treated his fellow-servant, had no more mercy with him, but put him into prison for the rest of his life. "Thou wicked servant," said he, "I was kind to you, and forgave you all your debts, because you asked me. Should not you, in like manner, have had compassion on your unfortunate fellow-servant?" God may so punish you, dear children, if you are not forgiving. He will turn a deaf ear to your prayers when you are in misery, children, if you are not kind and sympathetic to others. In His justice, God will have to treat you also in a hard-hearted manner, and abandon you to your misfortune both in this world and the world to come.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

OUR DUTY TO GOD

"Render, therefore, to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God the things that are God's (Matt., xxvi. 21).

When the Scribes and Pharisees heard the parable of the marriage feast, they knew Jesus meant them by the guests who had refused to come. In consequence, they were very angry, and began to plot how they might entrap Him in His words, that thereby they might have a pretext to condemn Him. For this purpose they sent to Him some of their own disciples, together with some of the friends of Herod. They began by flattering Him and praising Him for His bold and fearless declaration of His opinions. When they thought they had deceived Him as to their intentions, they asked Him with deep cunning "whether it was lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not."

Jesus knew very well what their motives were, and the treacherous plot by which they hoped to entrap Him; for, if He said "Yes," the Jews would hate Him as being an enemy to their country, and, if He said "No," Herod would seize upon Him for resisting the government.

Jesus asked for a penny. When it was presented to Him, He asked "whose image was on it." They said "Cæsar's." Then said Jesus: "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." When they heard this, their malice was forced

to yield in admiration to His wisdom. Going away, they dared ask Him no more questions.

The Pharisees then hated our Lord, and, with the keenness of vision that hatred gives, they watched His every gesture and caught up His every word, ready to see evil if evil could be seen in them, and, if no evil could be found, ready to twist them with malicious trickery to an appearance of evil. They looked for a flaw in that perfect character, but never a flaw was there, and a sort of sullen despair settled down upon them till someone of a subtler turn than the rest hit upon the thorny question of paying tribute to Cæsar.

Cæsar was the Roman Emperor of the day, for the scepter had passed from the house of David, and the diadem of Juda's princes was humbled to the dust. A pagan and a stranger ruled the people. You can easily imagine how bitter it was for a Jew, who loved his country, and knew the place that she had held of old in days before Rome had risen on her seven hills—how bitter it was to have the stranger ruling within the gates of Jerusalem. There were so many things to remind them of their condition. There was the house of Pilate, the Roman Governor; the Roman soldier with his haughty tread was seen in the streets of the city that to every Jew was dearer and more sacred than his father's grave. And, looking at those sights, the Jewish heart was very bitter; and graven deep in every Jewish heart was the hope that some time, and soon, the God of Israel would arise and nerve the arms of Abraham's children to chase the Roman legions from the holy city.

Now, it was this that constituted the difficulty of the malicious question that the Pharisees asked Our Lord: "Is it lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar?" They thought He should answer either "Yes" or "No." If he said: "No,

it is not lawful," then He rendered Himself liable to persecution by the Roman authorities. If he said "Yes," then they could go amongst the people, and whisper that here is no true son of Abraham, for His heart is with the pagan enemies of his religion and his country. But our Lord, seeing their thoughts, did not answer simply "yes" or "no," as they expected; but, calling for a coin of the tribute, He asked about the image that was stamped upon it, and about the name that was graven around it. And, when they told Him that name and image were Cæsar's, He said: "Render, therefore, to Cæsar what belongs to Cæsar, but, oh! ye hypocrites, render to God what belongs to God." So far as the Jews were concerned, the answer was complete. They were using the coin of Cæsar's empire, and that coin represented order and good government, and protection to property and life, and the repression of the lawlessness that would make society impossible.

But Jesus did not pause here. Beneath the question they had asked He saw another and a broader question. For there is another question which every heart must sometime ask: "To whom does it owe allegiance? Who is the Sovereign Master?" And this question is answered very differently by Him. Some live as if the world owned them body and soul; some, as if the devil were their sovereign master. Jesus Christ said this: "Render to God the things that are God's." Now, man belongs to God. Therefore, to God alone, in the first and highest place, man owes his soul's best service and his heart's best love.

Man was created by God, with his marvellous aptness for the world's work. God gave him his mind that receives into itself the images of material beings, and changes them from sight and sense to knowledge. But,

above all, God gave him his soul; and God took care that man's destiny should be so stamped upon it that it can never be forgotten. God made man to be for a time master in this world, and accordingly He gave him a body moulded from the slime of the earth, that he might have kinship with the world he was to rule. Look at a man as he does his work in the world, and you can see only the body with which he works. But do you imagine that the body makes the man, or is the man? Well, if you imagine so, you need but wait till you see a man lying dead. Corruption has not yet had time to do its work, and the body is there still, not a feature wanting. But the hands are lifeless, and the lips are white, and the tongue has never a word to say, and the fire has died out of the eyes, and dull gray paleness has spread across the face, and, if the dearest friend the dead man ever had were to whisper in his ear, the voice he loved would wake no flutter in his silent heart. It will need the trump of doom to wake that dead unlistening ear. Is this lifeless thing a man? Ah, no; something has gone out of it that made it a man. For God has demanded the coin of the tribute, and the angel of death has taken the soul out of the body, and has given it to be examined into the hands of Jesus Christ, and He reads there the image and the inscription that is on the soul—the image and inscription of God Himself. If, then, this man who is lying dead, has been paying tribute, not to God, but to the world and its works; if he has given the powers and faculties of his soul to the paltry ends for which they were never meant; if he has lived for the earth with which he was connected only by the body that perishes—then, while earth grasps his body to her bosom till it moulders into dust, the soul that he refused to give to God is lost for all eternity.

And there are people who tell me that they are too busy to pray, too anxious about the world to pray well, too much engaged with the affairs of life to have any time to frequent the Sacraments. They live as if this earthly life were to last forever, but the day will come when they find that the only stroke that counts in the battle of life is the stroke that was stricken against God's enemy and their own; the only thing that is of any lasting worth is what they have done for the salvation of their soul.

It is sweet to be in the service of the Lord. Believe me, it will seldom rob you of your comfort and never of your happiness. Be generous with God and give Him what is His, with a profound sense of gratitude for the infinite condescension with which He has deigned to accept your service.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

OUR DUTY TO OUR NEIGHBOR

"'Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but come and lay Thy hand upon her and she shall live.' And Jesus, rising up, followed him, with His disciples" (Matt., ix. 18).

In your Bible History you have read about Jesus taking a boat to cross the sea. Shortly after the boat left the land, a violent storm arose. The waves covered the ship, but Jesus slept. His Apostles and disciples who were with Him became frightened, for they feared all would be lost. Then Jesus rose and calmed the sea.

When the boat landed on the other side, a multitude of people came and, with great joy, welcomed Jesus. Among those who met Him was a man named Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, who begged Him to come and heal his daughter, who lay dangerously ill. Jesus went with him. As Jesus was passing through the crowd, a woman who had been sick for twelve years, and had in vain sought relief from many physicians, came behind Him and touched His garment. She was immediately cured.

Whilst they were on the way, a servant came to Jairus and told him his daughter was dead, and it was useless to trouble himself any further. And Jesus said to him: "Fear not; only believe." When they came to the house where the young woman was, they found a great crowd weeping and lamenting. But, Jesus approaching said:

"Weep not; she is not dead." They laughed at Him, for they all knew too well she was dead. Then Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John and the parents of the girl, and went into the room where she lay. Taking her by the hand, He said: "Arise!" And immediately she rose and began to walk through the house.

You will all say that Jesus performed a very kind act. He consoled the afflicted father, and rejoiced the heart of the grief-stricken mother. Jesus went about all the cities and towns, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity. And, seeing the multitude, He had compassion on them, because they were distressed and lying like sheep that have no shepherd (Matt., ix. 35, 36). And the Evangelist tells us "they brought all to Him that were diseased and that were possessed of the devils; and He, laying His hands on every one of them, healed them."

His visits were paid to sinners, and He was found in their company. "I came not to call the just but sinners to repentance." He went to the rich men's houses, He went to public gatherings, but not for pleasure. He went only where He could teach truth and win from sin, or cure disease. Most of the time He was among the distressed and afflicted, the low and despised—such as were afterwards gathered at Corinth: "Not many are wise, according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but the foolish and the weak and the base and the contemptible hath God chosen" (I Cor., i. 26).

Follow the example of the Blessed Lord in all your works of spiritual and corporal mercy. "My little children, let us not be satisfied to love one another in word, or in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (I John, iii. 18). It is in the power of each and every one of us to instruct

the ignorant, to reprove those who do evil, to give counsel to those who require it, to comfort the afflicted, to bear wrongs and the defects of our neighbor patiently, to pardon injuries, to pray for the living and the dead, especially for those who have persecuted us. By these marks it may be seen whether our charity is sincere; whether we are truly united to Jesus Christ; in a word, whether we are the children of our Father who is in Heaven.

No less than the intellectual and the moral, the physical man was an object of solicitude to our Lord. Hence, those corporal works of charity which He imposes as a sacred duty on all of us, according to our state and condition: to give food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty, to afford hospitality to strangers, to supply clothing to those who need it, to visit the sick, to visit and comfort the prisoners, to ransom the captives, and to bury the dead.

In these precepts, so worthy of a God made Man, we find the cause and explanation of all those wonders of charity unknown among pagans, but so common among Christians that they are hardly remarked. Here we also find the relief of all the miseries that can beset our frail existence; for these charitable duties embrace the whole of the life of man from the cradle to the grave. Thanks to them, the swathing-bands for wrapping up the newborn babe and the winding-sheet for enclosing the lifeless corpse in its coffin are equally sure to be provided.

"Love thy neighbor as thyself"—such is the commandment our Divine Lord followed out to the letter. Who is our neighbor? By neighbor we are not to understand merely our relatives, our friends, our benefactors, the inhabitants of the same city or country, the disciples of the same religion. This tender word, made familiar in

human speech by the Gospel, comprises all men without distinction or exception—Christians, heretics, Jews, heathens, the living and the dead, and even our enemies. Our charity ought to be universal—that is to say, Catholic like our Faith.

Hence, we ought to regard all men as members of one family, as children of one father; and, consequently, we should endure one another, forgive one another, help one another, wish well to one another, and do to one another all the good in our power. It is thus that we shall know all, love all, and honor all as the dear children of Our Father who is in Heaven. Here again, what great food does our Lord Jesus Christ supply on which we may nourish our love! How boldly does He attack the great law of universal hatred—that law which was the shame and misery of the pagan world, as it is still in varying degrees the shame and misery of peoples, of families and of individuals who are unfaithful to the fundamental principle of charity.

The rule for loving our neighbor is to love him as ourselves. This rule would alone suffice to prove the divinity of Christianity. Never did any human legislator propose it—much less dare to impose it. What could be more suited to make earth an anticipated Heaven? On the other hand, what rule could be more secure? No one can escape from it, or falsify it with lying interpretations. To love our neighbor as ourselves, is to wish and do him all the good that we could reasonably hope anyone would wish and do for ourselves, if we were in his place or he in ours.

In this way Jesus Christ spent His life, and in this way must we spend our lives—doing our good deeds in the alleys and by-ways, the secret lanes and obscure courts, to the outcasts, the dirty, the poor, the sinning;

not doing merely the good that every man can and will do, but doing also the good that so very few seem willing to do. These latter are the deeds whose fruit will be more appreciated and lasting, and whose fame will spread abroad into the whole country. And, finally, these are the deeds by which the Saints gained Heaven.

LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

BEFORE THE JUDGE

"I am the Lord who search the heart and prove the reins; who give everyone according to his way and according to the fruit of his devices" (Jer., xvii. 10).

At the end of life we must all appear for judgment and render to God an account of our stewardship. There will be no exception. Rich man, poor man, king and beggar, must all appear before the Judge. Nothing is now hidden from God, the Judge, nor will anything be hidden from Him then. The sins which we have committed, and for which we have not repented, will be a source of anguish to us then. We will cry out to God for forgiveness, but it will be too late. God's justice will demand satisfaction.

There is a story of two wicked cities. Because the people of these cities were sinful and did not obey His laws, God willed that fire and brimstone should pour down upon them. He ordained that the cities and their inhabitants should be 'expunged from the face of the earth.

Early in the morning, Abraham went from his tent, and gazed long upon the two cities. He saw smoke curling heavenwards and the people scurrying to and fro in great terror. And Abraham wept, for the cities had offended God and were now suffering for their folly.

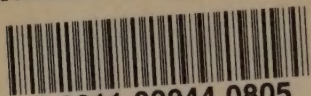
St. Paul tells us how to save our souls when he says:

"But, if we should judge ourselves, we should not be judged." He means that, if we examine ourselves daily, discover the faults we have committed, and then make reparation to God in so far as we are able, we shall have no need to fear the judgment of God.

To-day is the last Sunday of the ecclesiastical year. The Gospel for to-day relates what will happen at the end of the world, and it tells of the terrible Judgment that will then take place. If the end of the world were to come to-day, would we be ready for that Judgment?

Let us examine our consciences and ask God's pardon for the offenses we have committed against Him. Let us imagine ourselves standing before our Divine Judge. If we do this every day of our lives, if we daily make reparation to God for whatever faults we may commit, we need have no fear of His Judgment.

CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL UNION
C001
X1756.Z9R3
BIBLE STORY SERMONETTES FOR THE CHILDREN



3 0311 00044 0805

WITHDRAWN

BX

1756

.Z9R3

AUTHOR

Reuter, Frederick A.

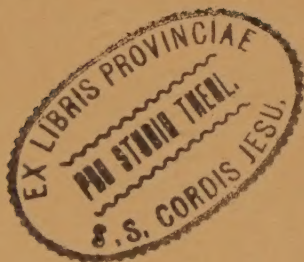
26021

TITLE

BIBLE STORY SERMONETTES
FOR CHILDREN'S MASS FOR..

252.75

R447B





3 0311 00044 0865